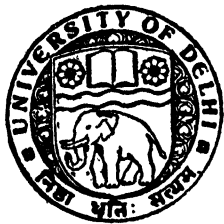


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## HAPPIER YEARS

For  
my most lenient critic  
who would not have me any different



*By the same Author*

STALKS ABROAD

BIG GAME OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN CHINA

BRITISH DEER HEADS

HUNTING AND STALKING THE DEER

(with Lionel Edwards)

A HIGHLAND GATHERING

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BRITISH SPORTS AND SPORTSMEN

THE KEEPER'S BOOK

AFRICAN BIG GAME

(Lonsdale Library)





THE AUTHOR  
(from a sketch by Lionel Edwards)

# HAPPIER YEARS

By  
H. FRANK WALLACE

*Illustrated by the Author*

EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE  
LONDON

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## FOREWORD

**I** MAKE no apology for this book which was written in the first place to ease my own mind when the winter evenings were long and the outlook far from inspiring. It has been to me as a friend in very dark and trying times and for that reason I send it on its unknown voyage with something of a sigh. Yet though our days of close companionship and comfort together have passed, I cherish the hope that some of the things which we have talked over and laughed at together may serve as an introduction to others who may spare a nod and a smile in passing. After all, no one need prolong the meeting unless they so wish, for like a chance acquaintance a book may be cut or not as desired.

The worst of any reminiscences lies in the fact that they possess, unavoidably, two drawbacks. First, those which would make the best reading frequently die stillborn; for those who should write them refrain. Secondly, that the majority of stories most calculated to amuse the reader have, in many cases, to be omitted.

In this latter class, either because I have no wish to hurt anyone's feelings or because the stories are not mine to tell (and for the inclusion of any 'poached' I trust that I may be forgiven) there are some which I have not set down. These include "The Strange Case of the Murdered Chauffeur"; "The Singular Incident of the Prince who Lost his Temper"; "The Preposterous Behaviour of the Bald-Pated Peer"; "The Sinister Affair of the Halfcaste Crook and the Shanghai Policeman"; "The Episode of the Temerity of the Adventurous Yachtsman and the Casting Away of the 'Jasper Hope'"; and "The Repulsive Circumstance of the Kilted Hebrew."

There is another drawback which any writer of such a book as this will, perhaps unexpectedly, discover. Shall he name the protagonists of his anecdotes, or leave them in decent, though possibly, regretted anonymity? An



incident, amusing in itself, may possess an added charm be its hero famous, of notable descent, or known to the reader. The recorder of such, should he be on sufficiently intimate terms, may write familiarly of "dear old Bill Urquhart." This may be of no very great additional interest to those who are unaware that such a gentleman exists. To dispel such ignorance or to lend an increased prominence to his pages, the author may, and sometimes does, indicate by an asterisk and a footnote that "dear old Bill" should be correctly addressed as "Major-General Lord Urquhart of Urquhart, P.P.C., R.S.V.P., Gov.-General of the Isle of Dogs."

The reader's reactions vary with his numbers. One may say "How interesting! Fancy that happening to Lord Urquhart."

Another comments "D— snob! Fancy dragging in a rotten story like that just to show he's met Bill!"

A third, "Of course it wouldn't have been nearly so amusing if it had happened to Sam Jones!"

A fourth, "I hate these beastly footnotes at the bottom of each page."

"Old Bill" himself may consider that the story, feeble as it may be, does not redound to his credit, and cut the author when next encountered.

In order to steer clear of these pitfalls I have, in most cases, relied on the inherent merit of any stories I have had to tell, without mentioning names.

In my life there has been much for which I can be thankful. To have seen the world when all the geese were swans and to have stored up memories. Springtime in Paris, violet-scented, before she had been defiled, the dawn coming up beyond the towers of Notre Dame; to have walked on the terraces of Versailles and lunched in the house of the Pompadour. Russia under the Czars; the needlelike spire of the fortress of Peter and Paul, black across the frozen Neva; the red walls of the Kremlin. Berlin before the last War, wild duck flying above the Tiergarten. Capri and Vesuvius across the Bay of Naples. To have picked oranges at Amalfi and in the gardens of San Antonio, bananas in Africa and pineapples in Hawaii. To have sailed into unknown harbours in the early dawn

and from the decks of tall ships seen their wonders unfold.

Most of all to have known the beauties of my own land. To have walked on lawns scented with June roses, beneath tall, moon-lit trees; to have lain in heather beside still lochs, whose little beaches held such loveliness that the wavelets came hurrying lest it should be gone ere they arrived. To have heard the plop of rising trout, the call of grouse on the fringe of the moor, and the roar of stags in the high corries. To have seen the Western Isles from Knoydart, and sunset beyond the Five Sisters of Kintail from the shores of Loch Affaric. To have wandered through the woods of Cawdor, loveliest of ancient homes, and to have followed the roe through the glades of Altyre. To have waited for the first snowdrops, the golden heads of nodding daffodils, the scent of lilac, the whisper of birches and the sighing of the firs.

To have been gladdened by the lighting of an eye in welcome, and to have felt the clasp of a loved hand. To have met a few in great positions and many in smaller ones and to have found that in essentials those whom I most admired were very much the same. To have won the affection of a few and to have learned, as have so many wiser men, that it is the simple things of life that are the most enduring and the most to be cherished.

To have had a few small successes and many failures and to have learned to appreciate each at their true worth. To have loved beauty in any form and to have acquired, though so inadequately, a little of the knowledge necessary for its appreciation. To have attempted, when needed, to give a little help to others and to have received so much myself. In a word—to have lived.

My thanks are due to the Duke of Devonshire for permission to include the portrait of Kitty Fischer. The sketch of Horatio Ross is from a photograph by Mayall, that of his son Edward from one by West of Southsea. For permission to use these I am indebted to Lady Ursula Abbey and to my old friend Lionel Edwards for a similar favour as regards the frontispiece.

Also to the editors of the "Field" and "Country Life" my thanks are due for allowing me to include material originally

appearing in the form of articles which is incorporated in Chapter XV.

Many of my friends have given me help and encouragement, none to a greater extent than has the Bishop of Lichfield. To them I am sincerely grateful, and also to Mrs. Maxwell, who with unruffled calm and cheerfulness coped with the intricacies of my bad handwriting and reduced it to order, and to Brigadier Edgar Anstey, who very kindly corrected the proofs.

F. W.

OLD CORRIEMONY, 1944.

# I

## *VERY EARLY DAYS*

"When that I was but a little tiny boy."  
"Twelfth Night," Act v, Scene i.

**M**OST books of reminiscences seem to begin "I was born on such and such a date in the year so and so." This is all right for memoirs written by distinguished people, about whom the reader naturally wants to know every detail. In the case of an undistinguished sportsman such considerations do not apply. I cannot imagine anybody being in the least thrilled at gaining any information as to where or when I was born, so all that part we can consider skipped.

Such volumes usually go on, a sentence which I will crib, "I passed a comparatively uneventful childhood," merely to remark in passing that no childhood can, to the child, be uneventful. Childhood is crammed with events which appear so important to the protagonist, each more important than the last, ousting the other with such surprising rapidity that in later years they become merged into an enormous blur, from whose rosy mists few stand out predominantly. That is, of course, with the ordinary child. Had I been patted on the head by Queen Victoria, kicked in the stomach by the Prime Minister, painted by Sir John Millais, or dragged out to recite before a distinguished audience who acclaimed me as a coming star, I should set down my childish recollection of these startling events with what verve and gusto I could. Alas! I can produce no such exciting curtain-raiser.

Vaguely I remember my mother announcing one morning that at 10.30 my education would begin and that she would teach me my alphabet. I could identify the exact spot in the room where this took place. I remember, clearly, within a foot of the same spot stood a table under which I dived in terror, lustily howling, when the door suddenly opened to display a coal-black

negro, the first on whom I had ever set eyes, clothed in the habiliments of a clergyman. That he was indeed a clergyman, a missionary from "Darkest Africa," though which precise locality in that vast continent was privileged to witness his activities I had not the faintest idea, whom my father had asked to lunch, did little to allay my terrors.

I think it must have been in spite of this encounter rather than because of it, that some few years later my brother was struck with a mild proselytising mania, fostered by our instructress of the moment, who was of a religious turn of mind. Having tried our 'prentice hands on Henry, to whom I shall refer later, who indignantly denied any necessity for this attempted conversion, our only safety-valve beyond attending church regularly every Sunday lay in the distribution of tracts. These were small pamphlets which, like some modern advertisements, started off with totally irrelevant matter designed to capture the attention of the reader into whose hands they chanced to fall. Interrogatory titles—"Are you being poisoned?"—"Why is your nose so red?"—"Have you ever been on the back of a runaway horse?"—"Do you like flowers?"—were the sort of headings considered likely to arrest the wandering attention of the erring sinner. His thoughts thus captured, the writer plunged at the matter in hand with great directness and no consideration whatsoever for the feelings of the victim. Armed with a supply of these, under escort of course, we proceeded to make our daily promenades a nuisance to any members of the public encountered whom we considered on inspection were likely subjects for our ministrations.

My brother, considerably more seraphic in appearance than I, got away with it more frequently. I rebelled. After one or two reverses I felt that the accosting of total strangers with enquiries as to their spiritual welfare was scarcely my *métier*. I was told to persevere as there was no knowing how much good I might not be in a position to do. Rather reluctantly I agreed to continue my efforts. Attractive ladies were never indicated as suitable targets, only seedy-looking males, or those exhibiting obvious indications of a misspent life. The climax came one day

when we had very nearly reached home and I had successfully evaded any suggested encounters. Then my custodian of the moment stiffened like a pointer about to draw on a particularly odoriferous quarry.

"Look!" she breathed. "Give him one."

I thought it much more probable that the figure indicated would give me one! A gentleman of rather portly presence, with a rubicund, a very rubicund face, his hat tilted rakishly over one eye, was perambulating the street in our direction. His jaunty mien covered, I have no doubt, a multitude of sins. It even cloaked the rather tawdry appearance of a very shiny and ill-fitting suit.

I, urged on by my resolution to persevere, hastily shuffled through the ammunition in my pocket with a view to finding a suitable title. My victim was, apparently, not in process of dissolution from poisoning. He did not look as if he loved flowers. It seemed unlikely, inspecting him, that he had ever been on the back of a runaway horse. Then I found the very thing, though it did strike me that, possibly, I might be embarking on a delicate personal matter on which I had no real right to intrude. Gripping my tract damply in one hand, I assumed what I intended to be a saint-like expression and walked towards him. He probably thought that I was in the throes of a bad attack of indigestion. Mutely I held out the pamphlet. He, recovering from his initial surprise at being thus accosted by a small, unknown boy of rather repellent exterior, graciously extended one hand and took it from me.

His sight apparently not being too good, he proceeded solemnly and with great dignity to adjust a pair of pince-nez glasses on the most prominent feature of his face. Then he extended his arm and perused my little offering.

His face, as he grasped the import of my gift, grew distinctly rosier, though I should scarcely have credited such a supposition a few seconds earlier. It became bright purple. Guttural noises issued from his throat.

"You infernal little meddler!" he shouted. "What the hell's my nose got to do with you?"

He flung the tract on the pavement and swung his stick in the air. But it landed only on the ground. I had fled. So had my governess, who, tightly holding my brother by

the hand, had watched the proceedings from a respectful distance. I was a bit longer in the legs than they and caught up with them. We scurried up the road pursued by the imprecations of the gentleman I had accosted.

"I'd like to be the death of you" floated faintly to us on the breeze as we reached safety.

On looking back, all my sympathies are with my chance acquaintance; though I did think the suggested remedy for the annoyance I had caused him rather drastic.

Black funereal vestments, crêpe trailers and bonnets, were considered suitable wearing for the bereaved in those days, and on my regular walks, in strict custody, I remember a surprisingly pretty widow whom my custodian and I were accustomed to meet at set intervals. My brother, I fancy, at this period accompanied us in his perambulator, being eighteen months younger than I. Beauty in any form, even at that tender age, having a fatal attraction for me, I used to grimace and wink at this lovely apparition, until we had established quite a friendly footing though we never spoke. Judge one day of my surprise, on being herded into the drawing-room for the 'evening hour,' to find my lovely widow seated at the tea-table with my mother. I gave her an embarrassed greeting, and from that moment for many years, until her death subsequent to the First World War, she was my dear and devoted friend.

Her husband, an officer in a Highland regiment, had died in India leaving her with two boys. The elder, slightly older than I, had apparently once been tossed by a bull. Why the local 'Big Business' took a dislike to him I never discovered. He was a powerful child, not unlike the animal which had maltreated him, and everything he did which did not fall within the code of accepted normal behaviour was put down to the bull. I sometimes wished that we had had a bull in our family. It was very convenient. If some child at a party annoyed Giles, for that was his name, and Giles with a well-directed cuff sent it reeling into a corner or emptied a jug of milk on its head, the sufferer was told it mustn't mind and stop crying because "poor Giles had been gored by a bull." You could even see the place in his skull where the horn had

gone in—"The hair's never grown again!"—if you were sufficiently interested.

Poor Giles! I wonder what happened to him. But his mother was a darling.

Later, when I was about twelve, there was another lady by whom I was attracted. I never discovered her real name, but it was something like Flicker. I was much too shy ever to attempt to speak to her, but I knew, more or less, her routes and used to nip round corners in order to meet her unexpectedly (as I thought!). I can see her now, rosy cheeks, a twinkle in her eyes, a horrible little fur tippet round her neck, and a brown coat and skirt. As I grew older, a good deal older, I heard more of her, but never from that day to this did we meet. I was once told, with what truth I know not, that she had ended up as a white rabbit in the Drury Lane Pantomime. Poor Miss Flicker!

I do not suppose that we were much unlike other children. We were told at intervals that we were very naughty. I imagine we were. On the really serious occasions when we broke out my mother produced a small black cane, the threat of which haunted my guilty mind. With this we, or rather I, for my brother was seldom so active in crime, received suitable castigation. She never failed to remind me at such moments that she was more hurt than her victim, a statement which I accepted with a good deal of scepticism.

One of the moments on which the little black cane was produced occurred after a dinner-party given by my parents in honour of a distinguished naval officer. By way of enlivening what we considered might be a rather dull entertainment my brother and I substituted sugar for salt, the staff being safely occupied elsewhere, and, immediately prior to the guests assembling, sprinkled pepper liberally all over the chairs and in the carefully folded napkins. We then withdrew to a coign of vantage at the head of the stairs. The drone of conversation grew louder as the party crossed the hall into the dining-room coupled arm in arm, for a certain amount of ceremony long since dead was practised in those days. Tense with expectation we waited. To our delight we heard a cannonade of



sneezing break out which presently subsided into single, spasmodic minute-guns. That concluded the first part of the performance.

We crept downstairs. I cannot imagine how it was that the servants, continuously passing in and out of the door, failed to detect our presence in the hall, concealed though we were beneath a large table on which the serving was undertaken. Fail, however, they did.

The babel of talk, stemmed at the outset by the pepper incident, rose louder. We could now distinguish scraps of conversation.

"Is anything wrong with that cutlet?" we heard my father ask.

A female voice in reply was inaudible.

"Mine tastes very funny. Is yours all right?"

We nudged each other and exchanged delighted grins.

"It's very sweet" came in male tones.

"I think it's the salt. At least it isn't salt, it's sugar."

This was a third voice.

"Those boys, I suppose." This was our parent.

Titters from the ladies and an increased buzz of talk.

End of act two.

We were accustomed to maintain our stockings in a taut perpendicular position by means of black garters of elastic. A supply of these useful articles we had concealed in the pockets of our dressing-gowns. The time had now come to bring them into use.

Hooked on to the first finger of one hand, pulled taut with the other and smartly released, we had discovered that they could be propelled for a considerable distance. Waiting for a moment when the servants were out of the way, we left our hiding-place and took up a position close to the screen which protected the dinner-party from draughts and any confusion consequent on domestic service.

Then we came into action, rather like a naval one at long range. The target, of course, was hidden, but the first salvo sailed over the top of the screen and we were gratified at learning that the distance had been correctly judged by a loud female squeak and a staccato cry of "What was that?"

As our missiles were presumably lying somewhere on the table we considered that there would be no difficulty in finding a correct answer to this query. We accordingly, realising that our time was short, discharged a second and third salvo by rapid fire.

Our surmise was justified. The attacking force, rushing from the room, located our position immediately and we were hauled up for judgment. The ladies, at least the younger ones, laughed; the older ones frowned. The men, no doubt, thought what nasty little specimens we were. My mother looked very severe and my father furious. Nor am I surprised. We were despatched to our respective beds and told that we should be dealt with on the morrow. We were. What pangs have not my own children spared me!

Henry, the gardener, was our great ally. He, with a Vandyke beard and moustache, clear brown eyes, looking not unlike pictures of Charles I, employed his leisure in writing poetry. Samples, I regret to say, have not survived.

We discovered, this was some years after the dinner-party episode, that it was possible to raise a little ready cash by entrusting to Henry certain articles which he, acting as our intermediary, transferred to a nebulous entity known as 'Uncle.' Any superfluous belongings, such as knives, or pens and pencils of a rather superior order, flowed through the Henry conduit. The end came when two water-colours, removed from their accustomed place to make room for some later acquisitions, were presented to me; more, I fancy, because the owner did not want to part with them altogether and had no convenient resting-place for them in mind, than for any other reason. How often in after years have I imitated his action! This was too good a chance to be missed, their disposal promising a more substantial profit than the rubbish hitherto accepted by the obliging Uncle! He, we were confident, would be willing to pay a large sum for the privilege of securing two real hand-painted pictures. Through the conduit they promptly went.

My father, passing a shop-window and seeing there displayed pictures which had, until quite recently, adorned his own walls, not unnaturally made it his business to

discover the channel by which they had arrived. The poet, cross-questioned, admitted his share in the transaction. The conduit was effectually blocked!

Henry, in addition to being a poet, was death on cats—literally. He constructed, for he was a bit of a carpenter, a large box-like affair, baited with some private and evil-smelling mixture of his own which certainly had the merit of attracting every member of the felidae within reasonable range.

The cat population of the neighbourhood sensibly diminished, and agitated householders of both sexes were at all hours of the day and night to be found on our premises, enquiring for their lost companions. Henry, looking more like Charles I than ever, would courteously shepherd them away, assuring them with an air of compelling candour that he would at once inform them if he happened to come across the absent animals. Cats, he would explain, were funny things, noted for their amorous propensities, and doubtless, when the current love-affair had run its course, the missing pet would reappear in the home circle.

Meanwhile, the gruesome Golgotha which he had established in a corner of the kitchen garden grew in direct ratio to the elimination of all the cats in the neighbourhood.

Other highlights which come back to me were fireworks on the occasion of the Jubilee of '87. They were the first I had ever seen. Ten years later I went round the Fleet in the Royal procession. My lovely widow was a friend of the Admiral's and she took me on board his official yacht. How annoyed he must have been!

I remember a small craft, whose motive power was to revolutionise naval shipping, which shot in and out among the assembled vessels. She was called the "Turbinia." How magnificent did that great fleet appear drawn up in line at Spithead, and how strange would it look now if one of our huge modern battleships were alongside it with which to draw comparisons. I remember a May Day procession in brilliant sunshine, sleek horses in shining harness, gay with brightly coloured ribands. I remember the Duke of Cambridge, a stout figure with grey side-whiskers, in a red coat and rows of decorations, taking

the salute at a review when commander-in-chief. I remember the thrill of delight I experienced as a Highland regiment in scarlet doublets marched past, bonnets flying, kilts and sporrans swinging, to the skirl of the pipes. Never was so grand a sight. I remember convicts, guarded by warders in peaked caps armed with rifles overlooking them from high platforms, as they built new barracks. Mingled with these, incongruously enough, I remember the infuriated face of a strange man suddenly uplifted over the garden wall in a dripping bowler hat. A stream of water which I had directed into the road from a garden hose, left untended for a few moments by Henry, had found its mark! As Mr. Cheyney would say, "Was he angry, or was he?"

## II

### *A LITTLE LATER*

"Twice in our lives we can play at make-believe—once when we are children, once when we are lovers. And these are the happiest times of our lives."

A. S. M. HUTCHINSON, "Once Aboard the Lugger."

ONE of my earliest recollections is of going to the dentist. For some reason, I forget why, my brother and I were sent alone in the brougham. The brougham had just returned from the carriage-builders, where it had been repainted and done up. Very smart it looked, too, as we jumped in. I can remember the smell of it now. In those days instead of a speaking-tube a cord passed through a small hole in the front of the brougham and was attached by a loop to the button of the coachman. Beyond jerking this occasionally, just to let Bartlett, the coachman, know that we were all right, we, at first, behaved fairly well. But the day was bright, the sun was shining as it never seems to shine now, we were very young, and we were unattended. No wonder we wanted to let loose our superfluous spirits. We decided to play Indians. The advantage of youth lies in the fact that it can always adapt essentials to its environment. Here we were in a swiftly moving vehicle. Obviously it became in a trice the Deadwood coach and we the passengers attacked by Redskins. The only drawback lay in the fact that the coach not having been constructed in the first instance to enable the traveller to repel the attacks of these bloodthirsty creatures but for more utilitarian purposes, the field of fire was extremely limited, being confined to the two windows. This would never do, and the passengers were therefore given opportunity of proving their resourcefulness and agility by opening the doors, jumping out, running alongside, shooting a couple of Redskins and then hopping back into the Deadwood coach, which all the time maintained an even pace. We were traversing a part of the road across

Southsea Common which had just been newly laid with bright red gravel. It had also been well watered, so that the gravel might settle evenly after being rolled. After disposing of a couple of dozen Redskins an uneasy suspicion struck the passengers that the outside of the Deadwood coach might not be quite all it should have been. A small head popped out of each window, and what they saw caused them to pop back pretty smartly and stare at each other with horrified eyes. The smart, newly painted panels of each door were a sticky mass of red gravel and small stones.

"What shall we do?" quavered one.

"Try rubbing it with your pocket-handkerchief," faltered the other.

Out came the heads again, accompanied this time by arms. The scrubbing receipt did not seem to do much good; indeed, if anything, it made the Deadwood coach look even more peculiar than when the discovery had first been made. But streets had been reached. No longer was it possible to imagine that we were placing leagues of uninhabited sage brush behind. There were too many people about, and we subsided miserably into our corners until the dentist's was reached.

There Bartlett sat, the picture of what a coachman ought to have looked, with his side-whiskers and his smart livery and top-hat, while we watched him out of the waiting-room window, whither we had been ushered on our arrival. He was quite unconscious of the deplorable picture his smart brougham presented, until along came a pedestrian, an officious busybody, to whom even now after all these years I would willingly do bodily injury. What business was it of his that he should halt and after a derisive look at the dignified figure on the box say something and point? Never shall I forget the expression of horror and amazement which slowly suffused the face of that figure. Rage followed, and we crept from the window. We knew we were for it. Black care followed with us when we were eventually delivered to the tormentor.

The tormentor was also a valued friend. I still have the pocket-knife he gave me when I first went to school. On this occasion, by way of introducing a little light comedy

into the grim business upon which he was engaged, I put into operation a plan whose main features I had already thought out. In my coat pocket I had concealed a double-barrelled pistol. This discharged small pink caps with a considerable amount of noise. It struck me that it would be an admirable weapon with which to test the nerves of the gentleman, who was at that moment carrying out operations of considerable delicacy in my widely opened mouth. Cautiously lifting my arm, therefore, I gently thrust the pistol upwards and backwards and pulled both triggers. The result surpassed my most sanguine expectations. Dropping the particular pick which he was using at the moment—it very nearly went down my throat, a fate which I richly deserved—the astonished man stumbled backwards and collided with my brother, who had been carrying out some investigations on his own account. At the same time he let out a yell which would have done credit to the Redskins we had so recently encountered. This brought his manservant rushing to the door to enquire what had happened. Muttering something about “little devils” he reassured the underling, and, turning to me, told me just what he thought of my action. It did me good, for I never afterwards pointed a weapon near anyone, not even a toy one.

He took it extremely well; even when he discovered that my brother’s investigations had resulted in the destruction of a large collection of gold pellets, such as were then used for filling teeth. It appeared that the slightest touch from the human hand entirely destroyed their efficacy, and as my brother had painstakingly rolled every single one into a military formation upon the green felt tray where they resided, their owner could hold out but little hope of their ultimate recovery.

I forget exactly what happened when we did arrive home, after a very unpleasant five minutes with Bartlett, but I do know that my father was so angry that he would not speak to us for several days.

My double-barrelled pistol was, later, exchanged for similar articles but of a more deadly nature. Most boys, I imagine, before they are promoted to the dignity of fire-arms experiment with various forms of lethal weapons,

to their mother's distress and to the annoyance of other grown-ups with whom they are in immediate contact. My brother and I were no exception to the general rule.

We always had some instrument of destruction concealed about our persons which was brought into action the moment we considered the field was clear. Old French cutlasses, flint-lock pistols, or later 'Bulldog Derringers' procured with great secrecy from Mr. Gamage of whose entrancing catalogues we never wearied, were the most popular. On a later occasion a square, heavy parcel arrived at the school where I was pursuing my youthful studies. The headmaster handed it to me, remarking, "We shall want to know what that is!" The steely glance accompanying this statement was full of suspicion. Surreptitiously unwrapping my parcel under the cover of the table-cloth, I was relieved to find that it contained, not the Bulldog Derringer whose arrival I had anticipated but a special brand of barley-sugar of which I was very fond. The headmaster, after a somewhat unpleasant interview in his study, confiscated this delicacy; but, thinking probably that I should not dare to run two contraband cargoes in succession, allowed the Bulldog Derringer to slip in unchallenged a couple of mornings later. I do not remember ever having fired the latter. It was just the feel of having the thing in my pocket—with which you could kill a man!—that was so exciting.

The bullet which I carried in my cheek for forty-five years came from a revolver, an unusual weapon, a .22, with seven chambers, which I had myself loaded with one ball cartridge and six blanks. The ball cartridge was to be fired at a crow, but cocking the weapon turned the cylinder and the crow flew off at the sound of the shot. I it was, galloping down the road a few moments later, my trusty sword swinging at my side, having just robbed the London Mail, who received the infuriated guard's bullet in the angle of my jaw. A few inches at a slightly higher elevation, and I should not be writing these lines.

This took place after a visit to the Goatey tailor, a great friend of ours, so called because he kept goats which he had trained to jump on his back at the word of command. He lived in a small cottage containing two rooms, a large



part of one occupied by a box bed. In this receptacle the Goatey tailor, as we discovered, was accustomed to slumber until the sun was high in the heavens. We were in the habit, when our business took us past his residence, of creeping in after making certain that our quarry was safely at home. We then woke him by the simple process of inserting a couple of revolvers high up behind the curtains which shrouded his recumbent form and pulling the triggers as rapidly as possible. As may be imagined, the discharge of a number of shots in such a confined space never failed to bring our victim bounding into the open, uttering falsetto yells of terror. He invariably went to bed in his clothes, so we had no reason to fear any shocks to our modesty. Always he played up like a man. I can see him now, kneeling on the stone floor, his hands clasped begging for mercy, while the smaller of the two desperadoes growled out in true Deadwood Dick style, "Can you dance?" I can hear his quavering reply, "Yes! Master Piercey! if you'll spare me." "Then dance!" came the command, and the Goatey tailor would execute fantastic steps stimulated by the discharge of pistols, or prods from the cutlasses of Black Hank, or Red Ike, the Terrors of Blue Gap. There were no cinemas in those days but we had a well-stocked library of twopenny shockers. Again I recall the hero of one of these who used to practise by shooting at flies on the wall with a diamond-sighted pistol. Even in those days such a weapon struck me as unpractical!

A catapult, I fancy, is usually the start of a shooting career. Deadly in the hands of an expert, it is a weapon with which I never attained any degree of proficiency. My thumbnail always suffered. Lack of skill stimulated the admiration I professed when a witness of the dexterity exhibited by some sportsmen in the fashioning of their chosen weapon. Real enthusiasts always made their own 'catties,' and the intensity with which they entered on discussions as to the rival merits of square or round elastic, triangular or curved forks, or the best method of attaching the 'bag,' was only equalled by that which in after years they dissected the merits of rival bores or the science of ballistics. I remember one little catapult in particular.

The fork was a half circle, not more than an inch and a half across, fitted with double strands of thin, square elastic. The stem was long and the accurate shooting which its owner made with this little weapon was really remarkable.

The bow was another weapon with which I never achieved any remarkable distinction, though I have taken to it again recently with happier results. After discharging nine arrows into the midst of a covey of grouse squatting by the roadside without touching one, I felt that I should be wiser to try something else. Apart from the disadvantages of climate and the impossibility of concealment, the bow might be a deadly weapon in the hands of an expert poacher.

A visit to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show fired us with a desire to emulate the skill of the South American gauchos, who used the bolas. An imitation of the real article we contrived with bits of old salmon line, leather bootlaces and large lead bullets. One end was swung round the head, the two remaining ends, with bullets attached, being free. When sufficient velocity was attained the whole affair was loosed, the idea being to entangle the legs of any animal sufficiently misguided to encounter its somewhat erratic flight, and bring it crashing to the ground. Various domestic animals, cows being hot favourites, received resounding thwacks in the ribs from our ill-directed missiles, but I do not think we ever achieved our main object. Perhaps it was just as well, though I do not think the salmon line would have held a minnow! We should, I fancy, in any case have had some difficulty in retrieving our weapons.

The blow-pipe was my favourite weapon. "Walking-stick blow-tubes" as they figured in the catalogue had all the appearance of innocent bamboo walking-sticks. The round top was removable, and, after the ferrule had been unscrewed, with some practice—for it is an art which cannot be acquired at once—the expert was able to propel a clay pellet for a considerable distance.

Invaluable adjuncts to a family outing, many is the dog which, enticed from some roadside cottage by the noise of 'the machine,' I have sent discomfited away. The convulsive kick elicited from some innocently feeding cow

as we rattled past frequently drew surprised exclamations from the casual visitor unused to our ways. I still possess my favourite blow-pipe, purchased many years ago with hoarded pocket-money. It shoots as well as ever.

Our great delight was to go for an outing with a certain friend of the family. Grey-haired, bespectacled and to all appearance sedate, of, as they say, a certain age, his venerable appearance disguised a youthful appreciation of infantile jests which he is still fortunate in possessing. The old hansom cab offered grand opportunities for sport such as are not shared by the modern taxi. Comfortably seated in one of these antique vehicles one was well screened from observation, and a drive through the streets of London provided all the enjoyments usually associated with a day's sport in the country. True, there was no bag to carry home to an expectant housekeeper, but ammunition was cheap and no licence was required. Our elderly friend was an expert, and to see him bring off a high shot at the top-hat of a passing Jehu was an education. He had only one hard-and-fast rule, never to shoot at anyone coming towards him. A spot under the scapula was, we discovered, the vulnerable place to tickle up elderly gentlemen. I still recall our innocent delight at the startled jump and the furious expletives which burst from the lips of our first victim as we jingled down Piccadilly on that summer day so long ago. I have hit pigeons on the roofs of the houses in Eaton Place, but the distance was too great for the pellets to have any effect.

Once, in Scotland, when the family were paying a call, we were told to amuse ourselves until the call was over. We wandered round the house and out among the policies. The payee reared pheasants. Lots of pheasants. They wandered about in droves, more than half-grown. The opportunity was heaven-sent. We stalked them from behind a wall, and soon discovered that a pheasant hit on the back of the head with a clay pellet at a reasonable range does not recover. Two failed to do so, and tucked inside the tops of our kilts took their last trek back to 'the machine.' The head keeper, glancing as he passed at our swollen forms, doubtless attributed their condition to the normal greed of small boys.

The back seat on a bus made a fairly good stand, provided there was no one in front. I was on a bus one day which stopped near what was then the R.F.C. club. An extremely important-looking old gentleman came swaggering past, and as he proceeded down Piccadilly, looking as if he had the receipt for it in his pocket, I smote him on the vital spot. He stopped, glared at everyone in sight, looked everywhere except at the top of the bus, and muttering to himself resumed his progress.

My bus went on, passed him, and was caught in a block at the 'In and Out.' While we were stationary, along came my gentleman again. He was still muttering when I got him with the second barrel. This time his jump would not have disgraced a chamois. He tried to feel his back, took off his hat, glared at a passer-by who returned his glare with interest, looked at the sky, made several loud remarks and resumed his walk, halting at intervals to look round. The bus went on, and again, at the corner of Bond Street, we were stopped. I saw my victim approaching. It was quite evident that he was in a towering rage. Then I got him again. He whipped round and asked a man who was just behind him what the hell he thought he was doing? The man thought he had gone mad and told him so. The old gentleman looked as if he were going to have a fit! My bus swept grandly on and I left them hard at it with all the makings of a first-class row. I often wondered what happened.

When the weather was wet one could have a lot of fun. We used to retire to a top attic, from which coign of vantage opened umbrellas made satisfactory targets. It was better still when the rain ceased, as top-hats, and every smart person in those days wore a top-hat, were even better. It is difficult now, when plus fours are a common article of apparel and the majority of the pedestrians in Bond Street seem to have dressed from a junk shop, to recall the appearance of the streets as they were then. It was pretty work, for a top-hat is a small mark. The resounding smack which heralded a direct hit was the more satisfactory.

I spent an amusing afternoon outside Boulter's Lock one Sunday. There was a rage for toy balloons, and as the

lock gates opened and a string of boats and punts streamed out, above each there swayed in the light breeze one or more of these toys. A recumbent figure stretched full length in a punt was not a suspicious object and I was never detected. The first hit caused the balloon to bob gracefully and resume an upright position. However, I soon found the correct angle and with a slight pop balloon after balloon vanished. The excited exclamations which greeted their sudden disappearance were really rather funny. The late Mr. Sandow juggled past in an electric canoe. One of my friends suggested that I should flip the cigar out of his mouth, but, visualising the consequences if my aim was not quite accurate, I let him pass unmolested.

In my early days I once hit our butler in the back of the neck, a running shot as he crossed the yard, but the torrent of abuse which heralded this success warned me that it would be inadvisable to use him as a running deer a second time. He had his revenge, for the next time we went out unarmed he took the opportunity of forcing a large piece of cork down the tube of my blow-pipe. I nearly burst myself before I discovered what had happened.

We got a lot of fun out of life.

These halcyon days occurred less frequently after I had been despatched to a private school. My brother's imprisonment came later. The establishment selected was in Kent. Of the boys there with me who attained distinction in after life there were few. General Sir Norman Orr-Ewing is about the only one living at present. Ronnie Hardy was killed in the First World War. He had extraordinary attraction, great efficiency and daring as an officer, and was adored by his men. A memoir written of him shows the estimation in which he was held by all who knew him. It was entitled "The Beloved Captain." His elder brother, Bertie Hardy, was a boy of outstanding merits and would have made a name had he lived. He died at Eton when only sixteen.

I hated school and was acutely miserable. So much so that not long after my arrival I determined to quit. Late one evening I advanced down the road which ran past my penitentiary, without any very clear idea of my subse-

quent plans. Long rows of hop poles, silhouetted against the sky on either hand, oppressed me. They seemed enormous. I looked back and with a dramatic gesture and a choke in my voice exclaimed, "Goodbye, old school!" Considering that I had only enjoyed its hospitality for about two weeks, this, on reflection, seemed a trifle superfluous. It must even so have struck me then. I pondered the matter. It was growing dark and I felt very forlorn. After due consideration, my steps getting slower and slower, I decided that, as the total distance I had traversed was well under a quarter of a mile, I might return to, at any rate, warmth, tea and certainty (however loathsome!), rather than cold, hunger and unknown developments. Of these I was distinctly dubious, particularly of the reception which awaited me from my parents, provided I ever reached them. I returned. My absence, which had lasted possibly ten minutes, had fortunately been unnoticed.

It must have been about this period that "the great bath episode" took place, which long figured in family annals.

We were taken, my brother and I, for a couple of nights to an hotel in Northumberland Avenue, now no more, prior to our return to school. The day of our incarceration dawned. Having absented ourselves from surveillance for a short period with the object of replenishing our supply of foodstuffs before the prison gates closed, we returned to find grouped in the vestibule of the hotel my father, the manager, a chambermaid and odd members of the staff. Lying in the centre of this assemblage was a flat tin bath such as was provided in those days for the comfort of hotel guests.

It looked quite ordinary, but on closer inspection the enamelled interior could be seen pitted with a number of small black marks of irregular design from which the paint had been blistered.

"I tell you I know nothing about it," we heard my father exclaim in an angry voice. "I've never seen the thing before. I don't want the bath and I'm not going to be charged thirty shillings for it. Here it is in the bill. 'Bath—30/-—'."

"Perhaps the young gentlemen know something about

it," said the chambermaid sourly, having detected our presence lurking on the outskirts of the throng.

"Here, you boys," called my father. "Do you know anything about this?"

At first glance we didn't, and said so.

"What about these?" exclaimed the manager, suddenly producing a damp paper slip containing a number of small yellow fragments of wood.

Then memory pole-axed us. We did, alas! remember. It was customary in those days for cigar-smokers to light these luxuries (though they were not then so classed as they are now) with lucifers known as 'fusees.' A small black blob of some charcoal-like combustible ending in a head was attached to a short yellow wooden stem bound with wire. The necessity for the latter I never discovered. They were contained in striped yellow boxes. The head, applied smoothly to the side of the box, ignited the blob, which burned with a steady glow for perhaps half a minute.

We had discovered a box of these contrivances among my parents' belongings and, childishly pleased with the loud hiss they gave when ignited and plunged in water, had spent a considerable time happily engaged in striking them ere their immersion in the bath in which we had recently completed our ablutions. Unfortunately we had failed to realise that their potency for damage had not been extinguished on submersion. They had sunk to the bottom of the bath and irregularly burnt its chaste surface. We had to confess. The thirty pieces of silver were produced. At the termination of the proceedings the only smiling face was that of the manager. For once we were quite glad to return to school.

Close to this a family called Marchant, some of them well known in the cricket world, had a house. They were the first I ever knew to go in for the sport of hawking, of which my friend Captain G. Blaine, the well-known big-game hunter, is now the most prominent exponent in this country. The Marchants used to invite certain favoured boys to outings at their home. I still remember the White-heart cherries of which their orchard was full. No cherries eaten since have equalled them, either in taste or appearance. There was a lovely Miss Marchant with whom we



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TWO GREAT SPORTSMEN





used to fall in love. She was, I hope she will forgive me for saying so, considerably older than most of us. Of all her adorers, none was more ardent than my cousin, Hugh Wormald. Him she subsequently married. It is one of the few marriages of which I know, with any striking disparity of age between the partners concerned, which has been a complete and unqualified success. Hugh is well known in the sporting world and for many years ran a game farm. He is a brilliant shot and holds the record for duck in this country. The present Lord Dartmouth in 1913 at Laughton owned by the late Colonel Francis Meynell, whose hospitality I enjoyed on more than one occasion, killed 186 teal in one morning. On October 3rd, 1931, Hugh at the morning flight killed 200 teal, 16 mallard, 25 shoveller and 2 gargany, a total of 243. This record, so far as I know, has never been equalled. He ran out of cartridges and for three-quarters of an hour was unable to shoot. This occurred many years later than the days of which I am writing.

'Dickey,' a parson with a black beard whose real name was Davies; and 'Stoat,' a layman named Hardman, ran the school. The latter lived up to his name and inspired a good deal of awe. 'Dickey' was more pliable.

'Cad' fights linger in my mind, stones being used as long-range missiles. The range shortening, we had recourse to fists, though serious casualties were infrequent. A gentleman called Kiddy Large led the opposing forces. What happened to him after my last 'cad' fight about fifty years ago I have no idea.

Looking back, I do not know that it was a very bad school. It certainly was not a very good one. My sympathies now, formerly exclusively centred on myself, are with my parents. There are few more difficult pastimes than school selecting.

It all seems pretty easy when you start, rather like book recommendations which may, or may not, come off. It depends on the person to whom you recommend them. Someone tells you 'Brightden' is the ideal school. His child was probably there about ten years previously. 'Brightden' is examined and found to differ in every particular from those received. 'Sandyside' is advocated.

'Sandyside,' you discover, is built on clay, very cold and damp. 'Sandyside' disappears from the list! So do most of the others. Eventually, by a process of elimination, one is selected. The parents' troubles are by no means over, as any parent will probably agree. A young relative of mine was despatched to one of these establishments of learning, and as I was in the neighbourhood I was asked to visit him and enquire as to his welfare. He was uncommunicative. Then I saw the headmaster. He glowed with health and was terribly hearty. His attitude during our peregrinations among the boys reminded me of a farmer showing off his stock. "What we aim at here," said he, "is just to turn out pukka sahibs and white men." I nearly said, "What about good scouts and stout fellahs?"

It is the fashion, I believe, in some schools to allow small children to do whatever they like in order "to develop their character," sometimes with disastrous results. Apropos of this, I heard a story the other day of a child of this nature, with whom, small as he was, his parents could do nothing. During his 'hols' he was in process of visiting a large emporium run on very modern lines. So much so that a resident psychiatrist was installed to deal with the whimsies of young visitors.

The little brute in question had no sooner entered the store than his attention was attracted by a large, super rocking-horse. On this animal he seated himself and refused to be moved. The remonstrances of the attendants and parents were in vain. The manager had to be sent for, but the equestrian still remained firmly seated. Then the psychiatrist appeared. He studied the child, who returned his scrutiny with a defiant stare. Motioning the audience to withdraw to a little distance, he resolutely approached his victim and whispered something in his ear. Without a word the rider dismounted and rushed to his parents. Deeply moved, the father drew the expert to one side. "Tell me," he requested earnestly, "what was it you said to my son to make him so promptly obey?" "I told him," replied the latter, "that if he didn't get off the bloody horse I'd break his bloody neck."

From all accounts, a little old-fashioned treatment of this kind would prove beneficial in a good many cases.

Small boys are curious creatures. They live, as do all children, in a little world of their own; even when they grow bigger and become schoolboys. Into their realities grown-ups are not always permitted to penetrate. They are far more shy than girls; far more easily hurt. I think one of the most poignant moments that can come to a mother is when her son goes, for the first time, to school. She knows that he will come back, but she knows, as no one else can know, that the little boy whom she has sent away with so much loving care, such tender thoughts, such hopes and fears, will never return. He will love her just as much, perhaps more; but he will, however unwillingly, however unwittingly, have changed. He will have been up against life, he will have been into the world, small and trivial as that world may afterwards seem. He will have encountered those who, for the first time, she does not know. Perkins major and Tompkins minor are to her but names; perhaps hated names. To him they are realities. So it must be, but let not him who has had a happy and a cheerful home and the tender care of a loving mother think of these things lightly, as being of but small account. Such may have in after life many things which he will value—great possessions, honours, friends, a wife, children, a place in the world of affairs. He can never again have that which has gone. Let him cherish it whilst he may.

I must have been a smug, self-satisfied, puritanical little brute, yet I look back on the child who was the father of what I have become with a feeling almost of envy. He lived, so it seems to me, in an atmosphere of sunshine and happiness. He had so many dreams. Knights in shining armour, of whom he was to have been one, came riding through the dappled woods intent on high deeds, lofty ambitions and the righting of human wrongs. There in the meadows beside the sunlit streams waited lovely ladies. One there was in a green, tightly fitting dress, her golden hair caught in a mesh of pearls, slim, with laughing blue eyes, who smiled with parted lips and beckoned as they rode, whilst her companions, gay as she, played and wreathed their hair with brightly coloured flowers. Into the shadows they go, those radiant knights and ladies, and a little boy is left alone watching them with wistful eyes.

### III

#### ETON

"Bright with names that men remember, loud with names  
that men forget."

A. G. SWINBURNE, "Eton—An Ode."

**I**T was in January 1894 that I went to Philip Williams's house at Eton. This choice was dictated by the fact that my people were friends of his sister, a very charming woman who was once described as looking like "a frigate under full sail." She had married Admiral Dupuis, and their son, Charles, one of my oldest friends, only recently retired from the Sudan Civil Service, having finished his career as Governor of Darfur. To the great regret of his many friends he died shortly afterwards.

I suppose that every boy who has been to Eton remembers the first time he crossed Windsor Bridge and walked up the High Street. He can never cross it again with quite the same feelings. One of the minor points I recollect about my first arrival, trivial as it is (but how often do the trivialities of life impress themselves on the memory), was that on the way down from London in the train I read in the "Strand" Magazine "The Final Problem" of Sherlock Holmes. I can see now, quite clearly, the picture by Sidney Paget of Holmes standing close to the falls of Reichenbach gripping Moriarty. He did, it is true, after his plunge into the abyss, recover, but, as even his creator admitted, was never quite the same man again! How anxiously we waited for the next adventure. Some seem a little old-fashioned now, as my son points out, but the best were thrilling. My own favourite was, perhaps, "The Speckled Band." Lyn Harding made a terrifying figure in the play as Grimesby Roylott, the sinister doctor who could bend a poker with his hands.

I liked Eton as well as I should have liked any place of learning, and owe a great debt to my parents for sending



THE OLD B. & N. C. R. R. - CORPUS MONI

7/ 1932

Spencer



me there. Naturally I am quite convinced that it is the best of all public schools.

I should never have whole-heartedly enjoyed any. Some boys, fortunately for them, are able to do so. I was very shy, rather introspective, not very much good at work, though I did try, and, largely owing to defective eyesight, definitely bad at all games. A boy who is no good at games suffers, undoubtedly, a severe handicap, particularly if he possesses no other qualities on which he can rely for making friends. In my own case I can recall none.

My first half was remarkable for floods. So bad were these that we had the novel experience of being propelled down the High Street in punts and were all sent home, to our great delight, ten days or a fortnight before the end of the half. One boy, still living, arrived home just as his father was sitting down to dinner. Bursting into the dining-room full of the glad tidings he was met by a horrified stare.

"I knew it! I knew it!" roared his parent, giving him no time to make any explanation. "Go straight up to your room and stay there till I send for you."

Rumour had it that he was incarcerated for two days before he made it clear that he had not been sacked.

Williams's, when I was inflicted on it, was a rowing house. In 1894 we won the House Fours, and in 1895 had two members of the Eight in R. O. Pitman, who died quite recently, and Jersey de Knoop, who lost his life in the First World War. I remember them with admiration, and as an insignificant fag received from both kindness which I recall with gratitude. The former I never met after leaving Eton; and the latter only once. He killed a very fine 7-pointer at Caenlochan in 1910 and lent it to the exhibition of British Deer heads which I organised in 1913 in London for "Country Life." He was a most charming man. 'Rosie' Pitman, as he was known to his friends, and F. M. Robertson, whom I shall have occasion to recall later, married sisters. Charles Morrison, an American, was also a distinguished member of Williams's and rowed in the Eight in '94. The captain of the house was a boy called Wilson, known to his intimates as 'Shoddy.' He, small, dark, with a penetrating stare magnified



through the medium of gold pince-nez, had no outstanding physical characteristics but was a very good pianist and chemist. Mention of him always recalls:

Oh! Honey, my honey,  
If the night would only last,  
And never the daylight come.

Unfortunately I have never been able to remember the complete words of any song, as in this case, but the last line was "And listen to the music, to the music far away," which was what I frequently did in the case of Shoddy Wilson, for his room, the untidiest in Eton, was just under mine.

On one occasion he considered it his duty to beat me, a 'smacking' as distinct from a 'swiping.' The latter was inflicted by the 'Flea,' E. C. Austen Leigh, who was Lower-master in my time. . A genial old gentleman in reality, all the Lower boys were terrified of him. Rightly apprehensive of my impending doom I hurriedly donned two pairs of the thickest undergarments I could collect, inserting between them a large pad of blotting-paper which I anticipated would absorb most of the shocks to which I was to be subjected. Thus accoutred I awaited the summons. Presently it came. Awkwardly waddling down the passage I entered the execution chamber. My crime, I forget of what it consisted, was recited. I pleaded guilty. "Bend down over the piano."

As gracefully as my padding permitted I obeyed. Then came the shock, but not as I had anticipated.

"Wallace," came Shoddy's precise voice, "have you padded?"

I admitted the truth.

"Go and take it off."

With a heavy heart I waddled out of the room, removed the blotting-paper, but not the second pair of undergarments, and returned. Fortunately the absence of the former satisfied Shoddy's suspicions. I got eight: two 'extra for padding!

The fag, as a matter of course, had to toast two slices of bread for his master's tea. This was all in the day's work. I did consider, however, that I was being 'put upon' when

my fagmaster Gerald Kelly, now a famous R.A., elected to have a tea-party and on my arrival to cut two slices off his loaf for toasting, ordered me to operate on no less than twelve! Boiling with rage I hacked off twelve very ragged chunks, hurled eleven into the fire, scraped them into something that rather less closely resembled eleven bits of coal, toasted one piece properly which I placed on top of the pile, and slammed them down on his table. Then I hastily left the room, but was instantly resummoned and an explanation demanded. This taxed my ingenuity to the utmost. That I had had to leave the room on another errand, and returned "to find them a bit burnt," was not considered a sufficiently good excuse. I was not surprised! The case was put to a meeting of the library by the infuriated party-giver. Fortunately for me his skill as an advocate was not on a par with his subsequent mastery of paint, and it was decided that though my negligence as a toast master merited punishment, I was redeemed in equity by the fact that I never ought to have been given twelve pieces on which to operate.

A very small boy, with a red face and spectacles, was summoned by the 'Flea' to be swiped. The awful words uttered in the nasal tones of the 'Flea' were pronounced: "Praeposters, do your duty!" The small boy was placed on the block and sentence carried out, but so terrified was he that he scuttled back to his house with a large hiatus between his waistcoat and trousers, the latter being clutched in one hand somewhere in the neighbourhood of his ankles. A rumour got about that his portrait in wax was to be placed in Madame Tussaud's, and that only large sums of hush-money prevented so ignominious a fate. I do not suppose that, in reality, there was a word of truth in the story.

Another boy, whose name it is better not to mention, was sacked for a very serious offence. He boarded in a house at the corner of Keates Lane. Electing to depart during the middle of the morning when everyone was on their way back to their rooms, he bribed all the Lower boys in his house to throw rice and flowers out of the windows when he made his final exit. (Only the other day I met a well-known sportsman whom I had never encountered

since these days. I told him I was setting down some of our experiences of fifty years ago. "For heaven's sake," he exclaimed, "don't say I was beaten up by 'Pop' for throwing flowers out of the window when — got sacked!") The road was a seething mass of boys, through which a few rather savage-looking 'beaks' ploughed their way. Outside the house a fly was drawn up, and into it presently, amid a shower of rice, stepped the expellee attired in the height of fashion, top-hat, button-hole, fancy waistcoat and light trousers. Far from being ashamed, he appeared to revel in the excitement he was causing. Bowing and smiling to right and left, he graciously removed his hat and disappeared round the corner. It was not a scene to be commended. Nor did the whole school, assembled in Upper School a few days later at the bidding of that great man, the headmaster, the Rev. Edmond Warre, think so as they listened to his biting comments.

I have been told that on another somewhat similar occasion, long after I had left and the great Dr. Warre had been gathered to his fathers, the headmaster of the day was about to address the assembled school. One young gentleman of a mechanical turn of mind learning this, and considering that it was a pity the headmaster's exordiums should be addressed only to so small a section of the community, conceived the brilliant notion of fitting up a microphone and loud-speaker in the street. This he proceeded to do, and the headmaster, quite unconscious of the fact that a large crowd was also enjoying his winged words, proceeded to let go with considerable verve.

It was not safe to 'rag' the majority of the 'beaks,' as masters in my time were called. Later 'mob' was substituted for 'rag' and 'usher' for 'beak.' Occasionally, however, lapses occurred. There was a song popular at this time the refrain of which ran:

Oh! Mr. Porter, what shall I do?  
I want to go to Birmingham  
And they've sent me on to Crewe.

A master named Porter was walking to his classroom one day when a head was suddenly poked out of a window above and a voice carolled the well-known words.

"Do a hundred lines for impertinence," said Porter, glancing up without stopping.

He was a science master and used to conduct practical experiments, to the great delight of his class. For some of these, the more popular ones, darkness was necessary. Mr. Porter's request for the lights to be turned out in the science-room, which had tiers of seats rising one above the other, was the signal for an immediate general post. Boys would jump, toboggan over, or slither under the desks, the great object aimed at being again to be seated demurely when the lights went up. The master's frenzied exhortations went unheeded and the greater part of the time left was occupied in sorting everyone into their rightful seats.

A master's job is no easy one. Boys, like savages, are extraordinarily quick at spotting those with whom they can take liberties. Once this crucial point has been settled to their satisfaction, woe betide the master who allows them to get away with it. He will have no peace.

In French lessons we had to take in biggish dictionaries. One day a boy brought in a mouse in a match-box, suddenly let it loose and yelled, "Oh, sir, look! There's a mouse," and flung his dictionary across the room. Instantly every dictionary in the room was hurtling through the air amid yells and shouts of "Look out. There it goes," and a good time was had by all—except the master.

In one schoolroom, though this was after my time, there was a large window high up in the wall, with below it a ledge. Directing his division here one day was a young and well-meaning master who had little or no authority over its members. Having cut the cord which operated the window at a point high up, and with a ladder secreted in advance conveniently near at hand, the division assembled. At first all went well. Then several boys began to mop their foreheads. A hand went up. "Please, sir." One always started like that.

"Yes, what is it?"

"Please, sir, it's so hot. May we have the window open?"

It was then discovered that there was no cord by which this could be done.

"Please, sir, I know where there's a ladder. May I get it?"

Without waiting for an answer half a dozen boys rushed out and returned with a ladder. This, with a good deal of by-play, was hoisted into position.

The master asserted himself. "Now, boys. Stand back. I'll open the window."

"Oh, thanks awfully, sir. It is good of you. Get out of the way, you ass. Can't you see Mr. Jones is going up the ladder. Mind you don't fall, sir. Good people are scarce, ha! ha!"

Up went Mr. Jones, settled himself on the ledge and at last managed to get the window open. Then he turned to descend, only to find that the ladder had disappeared. Whilst endeavouring to deal with this problem he became aware that the entire room was full of large butterflies which swooped in graceful undulations into every corner. That they were mechanical he did not at first realise. Amid shouts and yells of laughter and cries of "Oh, sir. Aren't they pretty?" the door suddenly crashed open and in walked the headmaster. It is better to draw a veil over the finale to this idyllic scene. The unfortunate master left.

There was another young and inexperienced master who nourished an ambition to be popular. The boys, with an instinct approaching that of the untutored savage, discovered this amiable trait in his character and played up to it for all they were worth. Having "kidded him along," an expression I believe defining their relationship to him, they one day hoisted him on to their shoulders and paraded the room making loud noises. "Only very popular masters are 'hoisted,' sir!" he was assured. Glowing with this tribute to his qualities the unsuspecting young man attended 'chambers,' the morning meeting of masters, held daily.

"I've just been 'hoisted,'" he proudly announced.

"What on earth do you mean?" was the brutal enquiry of one of his more experienced colleagues. The story, losing nothing in the telling, was duly narrated.

"They've made a fool of you," bluntly retorted his interlocutor.

The seeker after popularity shortly afterwards disappeared and a less sympathetic and more experienced imparter of learning took over his disappointed division.

It was after my time, too, when it was discovered one morning that all the keyholes in the classrooms in the New Schools had been filled with plaster of Paris, which had hardened into rock-like consistency. The subsequent proceedings affected the whole school. I am not sure if the actual culprits were ever discovered.

There was a master known as 'Hoppy,' a small, bearded, bespectacled little man who invariably addressed individual members of his class as 'child.' He had a 'house,' which means that he boarded about 30 boys, and pursued the mysteries which engage the attention of mathematicians. If you executed the exercises he handed you to be done 'out of school' in coloured inks he was delighted, and the artist stood a good chance of getting away with it even though all the answers might be wrong. In the latter event, written in ordinary black ink the paper would be torn in two and had to be done all over again.

A boy in 'Hoppy's' house was either leaving or had been expelled. (Expulsions were not common, though I fear from what I have written that I may have given this impression. As a matter of fact, I do not think that more than three boys were sacked all the time I was at Eton.) The boy I have mentioned may have been "requested to leave" as he was not up to standard. I have forgotten. He was leaving anyhow and had a grudge against 'Hoppy.' Knowing the worst, he prepared for action. Inside the house was an open staircase with a balustrade round the top. These details I have only on hearsay evidence as I was never inside the house myself. This was all long before the days of proper baths. We used to wash in round tin affairs. One of these contraptions he balanced on the edge of the balustrade, filled with water. 'Hoppy's' routine was well known, and shortly after these arrangements had been made he entered through the front door. The bath and its contents descended with a reverberating crash, but whether 'Hoppy' had time to dodge the avalanche I do not recollect, nor its sequel. I scarcely think it can have hit him or he would have been obliterated.

Nor in those days was there electric light. We had brass candlesticks holding what we knew as 'Tollies' to illuminate our rooms. One horrid trick was to drip the hot candle-

grease on to the eyelids of a sleeping boy, which caused him considerable inconvenience when he awoke.

Another master, beloved by many generations of Etonians, was W. Broadbent—'Broader.' He was one day busy gardening and, pursuing his horticultural efforts, presented a large posterior to the windows of his house. This was too much for one of the young gentlemen under his care, who possessed, or knew where to lay his hands on, an air-gun. Seizing the weapon, he loaded it with a dart. Then, taking careful aim, he propelled the missile into the tenderest part of his tutor's anatomy. 'Broader,' however, stung by this enormity into unwonted activity, whipped round and identified the author of the outrage. He, in turn, was cited before the headmaster.

"What induced you," thundered the latter, "to put this painful affront upon your housemaster?"

"Please, sir," squeaked the boy, with unaccustomed candour, "I couldn't resist it!"

One of the most original boys at Eton with me, though I do not remember him then as being remarkable except for a hat more battered than most, was Horace de Vere Cole, known as 'Molar.' I never knew the reason for this nickname, though after we had left I got to know him well and saw a good deal of him at one time. It was after he had gone up to Cambridge that he became famous by a series of carefully thought out 'rags.' It was he who, disguised as an Eastern potentate, went to Cambridge and was conducted over his own college by the Dean or some other equally important person. He was given tea and told me afterwards that this frightened him more than anything else as he thought that it would take off some of his make-up. On another occasion he railed off a plot in the middle of Piccadilly, dug a large hole in the middle of the street, and then in the character of a British workman went off for lunch, leaving it gaping. It was always said that large sums of money were afterwards spent by various companies whose public benefactions suffered as a result of his activities. Ian Hay used this incident in one of his novels. It was Molar who descended on a British battleship as one of the suite accompanying the pseudo-Sultan of Zanzibar and was received with royal honours. It was

also rumoured that the Navy, resenting the hoax, subsequently took steps to retaliate.

On another occasion Molar, proceeding down Piccadilly, suddenly produced a surveyor's tape. Selecting a likely victim, he, in the most courteous manner, asked him if he would mind holding one end as he wished to take some measurements. On the stranger assenting, he placed one end of the tape in his hand and retired round the corner. Accosting the next most suitable looking passer-by he again repeated his formula, adding that he would be back in a moment, and then left the two unsuspecting strangers, each patiently holding the ends of the measure, but screened from each other. How long they were left or when the patience of one or the other became exhausted I never heard.

Both this story about Cole and that of the uprooting of Piccadilly are told also of Phil May. Cole may have got the ideas of these exploits from one of the greatest masters of line who ever lived. May went one better than Cole, as he enlisted the help of a policeman! Both stories are related by Thomas Burke in "English Night Life," a volume which I had not come across when I wrote the above.

After one of his adventures which had figured in the Press, I met Molar walking down Piccadilly with a pile of papers recounting his activities under his arm.

"Here, have one," he said. I wish that I had kept it.

He was a curious-looking man, very powerfully built. His hair, eyebrows and moustache all had an upward tendency. In addition he was very deaf. I asked him who his next victim was to be.

"What?" said he, in the soft, rather flat voice of the deaf.

"Who are you going to rag next?" I bellowed.

Molar assumed an expression of intense secrecy and bent forward.

"The Kais-ah!" he murmured in my ear. Unfortunately the war put a stop to that.

He meditated writing his reminiscences, and I for one am very sorry that he did not, as they would have made amusing reading. He loved shocking people and on one occasion was reported to have asked a guest at lunch if



he had ever seen him shoot. The answer was negative; thereupon Molar produced a revolver with which he proceeded to decorate the pictures hanging round the room.

One of the best stories about him was on an occasion when he was having supper with an Eton contemporary, now a well-known politician. Molar excused himself during supper and went out for a short time, returned, finished the meal and prepared to leave. He and his friend donned their overcoats and emerged into Piccadilly. Said the former, "I bet I can give you ten yards' start and beat you before you get to Burlington House."

"Right!" said his friend.

Molar, having placed him in position by a convenient lamp-post, explained that he would call "One—two—three, Go," which would be the signal to start running. He then retreated ten yards and gave the signal.

Off went the politician, and presently off went Molar uttering loud cries of "Stop thief." Instantly a crowd collected and went whooping down Piccadilly, urged on by yells from the rear.

Eventually the supposed thief was captured and in spite of his expostulation handed over to a policeman, when Molar, coming up, gravely charged him with the theft of his watch. Sure enough, in his overcoat pocket the watch was found, carefully placed there by the practical joker during his absence from the supper-room. Again rumour stated that only the intervention and promise of bail by a very prominent member of His Majesty's present Government saved the victim from a night in the cells. The victim of the tale was an inveterate ragger himself and bore no malice. Perhaps before it is too late he will write his reminiscences. In retaliation for this particular effort it was stated in the Press that he published a bogus obituary notice of Molar.

So long as they hurt no one and only cause innocent, it may be called childish amusement, a really good rag can be very entertaining.

On one occasion I thought Cole went too far. My wife and I were lunching in a well-known restaurant when I saw him at a table near by. I paid very little attention to what was going on, though I had noticed a couple some

way off who were behaving in rather a prominent manner. This had not escaped my neighbour's notice. Presently there seemed to be an unusual stir in our part of the room. Waiters bustled past looking rather agitated. The manager appeared and spoke rather angrily to Molar. Then I got a message from him: "Can I say that I sent you a note which has been delivered at the wrong table?" I wrote back: "Give me time to get out and you can say anything you like."

What had happened was that Molar, incensed at the couple who were attracting attention by their rather loud behaviour, had sent the waiter (it was a rule that waiters were not to take notes) with a written message: "I don't like your behaviour and I don't like your friend's face. Will you kindly leave the restaurant." The man had naturally complained. Hence the trouble. I left hurriedly. Molar was a dangerous person to get mixed up with. He died abroad, early in 1936.

It was in this same restaurant that on one occasion another boy who had been at Eton with me had an altercation with a stranger. The cold buffet was close at hand, so snatching up a large ham by the end he brought it down as hard as he could on the stranger's head and bolted before he could be captured.

One of the most amusing rags was carried out by the father of a friend of mine at Oxford. It must have taken a great deal of nerve. With a camp-stool and a salmon rod he installed himself on Magdalen Bridge. Putting the rod up he proceeded to cast over the bridge into the Cherwell. This novel sight before long attracted the usual crowd, who settled down to watch the proceedings with great interest. Punts passed slowly underneath the bridge as was their custom, and presently excitement grew to fever heat as it became apparent that the angler was into a fish. Buses stopped, crowds so great that all traffic came to a standstill thronged every available view-point, the reel screamed, and amid yells and directions from above a punt at last managed to draw near to the point where the line cut the water. One of the occupants leaned over and the climax was reached as he was seen to draw a large and lively salmon into the punt. There, in spite of its

squirms and wriggles, it was despatched and held aloft in triumph. Needless to say, it was not only landed in the punt, but had also been attached to the line by the angler's friends whilst hidden from view. It is the only case I know of a salmon being landed in the Cherwell!

The hero of this episode was walking with his daughter through one of the most fashionable London squares in the height of the season. It is hardly necessary to add that preparations were well under way for tearing up most of the roadway. A gigantic navvy swung a large hammer with leisurely insistence. Coming up behind, our friend watched him for some time and then leaning forward tapped him on the shoulder. "Temper!" he said very gently, admonishing him with his finger. (It may not sound funny but it was.) The navvy thoroughly appreciated the joke.

To return, however, to Eton. The majority of the masters were, to me, merely outward and visible signs of the regulations by which a schoolboy is bound. I knew them all by sight, naturally, and with certain of them I was brought into immediate contact. My housemaster, I, of course, knew well and liked.

My tutor, Mr. Ralph Penrice Lee Booker, was a short and extraordinarily tough little man with a sardonic sense of humour which he not infrequently exercised at my expense. Not to put too fine a point upon it, he loathed the sight of me, a feeling which I heartily reciprocated. Looking back, I do not in the least blame him; and to show no favour to a quick, intelligent boy and to hide irritation when confronted with such a youth as I must have been would have taxed the qualities of a much stronger character.

S. A. Donaldson, A. C. Benson and Edward Impey were the masters I liked best. Impey was an extremely good-looking man and I can still hear him say as he looked round his division, "Wallace, you're looking very wise behind those glasses, suppose we see what you can do in the way of construing." I fear my appearance of wisdom was entirely fictitious. A. C. Benson was a charming, kindly creature who attained popularity outside the school circle with the "Upton Letters" and other works. A son

of the Archbishop of Canterbury, E. F. Benson, the novelist and author of *Dodo*, of whom Lady Oxford and Asquith was supposed to be the original, was his brother.

Another master, Heygate, inspired feelings in me comparable to those with which I regarded my tutor. I scored off him once. He set his division an out-of-school task, namely to copy any picture we might care to select out of our illustrated history-books and to translate an ode of Horace into English verse. Our task completed, the master, blinking through his gold pince-nez, rose to tell us the result. Clearing his throat with an ingratiating smile he announced that the result had considerably surprised him, for a boy, whom he must confess, he had not expected to display talents such as would necessarily be called forth by his little experiment, had tied equally with another boy for the first place. That boy was Wallace, who, he would no doubt have liked to add, was usually to be found occupying as inconspicuous a position as it was possible to contrive somewhere at the bottom end of the division. I feel proud to have surpassed on this occasion the efforts of Mr. Christopher Stone, the only one on which I have done so.

It is surprising how few boys with whom one was associated in those days come clearly to mind. Of the hundreds, almost, with whom we mingled, the majority are in after life comparatively unknown save in their own immediate circles. They develop into good husbands and fathers, some even combine the dual role, and such, if they do not make the world go round, at least serve to keep it steady. Never has this been needed more than now. There are, of course, brilliant exceptions who would be remembered anywhere. The present Lord Halifax, then Mr. Edward Wood, was in the pupil-room I infested. George Lloyd, cox of the Eight, was at Donaldson's. I remember him clearly, rather detached, with an air of looking far beyond his immediate surroundings. Many years later, when he had become famous as Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, he was sent to Egypt as High Commissioner. Imperious at times, yet with a curious streak of childlike naïveté, he knew well how to impress natives with the magnificence of the British raj. His own countrymen on

occasions were not exempted. There was a story that having told his A.D.C. that he required his car at two o'clock, the latter was heard, off stage, having left the presence, giving the order "God wants his chariot at two." This remark did not increase his popularity.

McClintock-Bunbury stands out prominently attending parades of the 'Dog Shooters,' as the E.C.R.V. were vulgarly called, in full Highland regimental dress. He was killed in the Boer War.

Of Sir Nevile Henderson I shall have something to say later. He was British Ambassador in Berlin immediately prior to the Second World War.

The Grenfell twins, of whom John Buchan wrote a charming memoir, were so alike that many could never tell the one from the other. They used to change from one master to another without detection. Both in my division, I never had any difficulty in distinguishing between them. Francis I always thought the better looking.

F. M. Robertson, a charming and lovable personality, was a prominent member of 'Pop' in my early days at Eton. I knew him in later years when we often used to meet at Warnham Court. His son Ronald, whom I first knew as a small boy at Eton, has often entertained me in his delightful flat, from the windows of which can be seen, to the south Edinburgh Castle, and to the north the Forth. Here, looking at old photographs, we forgot the trials of the passing years in a flood of reminiscences of the old happy days when all the world was young, when the sun lay hot on the grass and the deer drowsed in the shadow of tall trees.

Another prominent member of 'Pop' was Colin Black, whose house lies just across the road from the flat I have mentioned above. A great swell, with numerous school shields dangling from his watch chain, as a Lower boy I held him in admiring awe. Secretary of the Royal Bodyguard of Scotland, a prominent lawyer, and a keen deerstalker, we exchanged on more equal terms reminiscences of the days when we were younger and less afflicted by the evils which befall mankind. He, I grieve to write, died suddenly of heart-failure while stalking at Ceannacroc in the autumn of 1943.

The present Duke of Westminster, then Viscount Belgrave, was one of the best-looking men I have ever seen. Tall, with his reddish hair, clear-cut features, broad shoulders and narrow hips, he might have sat as a model for Rudolf Rassendyll. Basil Lubbock, another good-looking boy who had rowed in the Eight, joined the rush to the Klondike when he left Eton, and subsequently wrote "Round the Horn before the Mast."

The present Lord Perth, then Mr. Eric Drummond, was my fagmaster. I had trouble with him on one occasion, or rather he had with me. The headmaster, whose handwriting was not remarkable for legibility, was in the habit of pinning up on his door the 'Sunday Qs.' for 6th Form. It was the fags' duty to copy these out for their respective masters. This duty on the present occasion fell to me at the behoof of Mr. Drummond. Being insufficiently educated to cope with the Rev. Edmond Warre's calligraphy, inscribed in his distinctive blue ink, I copied out the questions, or rather what I thought these questions were intended to be. Mr. Drummond, when the moment came to give his attention to this interesting document, found himself considerably puzzled by my well-intentioned effort. I shared his bewilderment when asked for an explanation. The only and perfectly true one that I was able to advance, namely that I could not read the original, he stigmatised as grossly unsatisfactory. I rather fancy I was beaten. Lord Perth was second string to H. C. B. Underdown, who was Captain of Williams's, when we won the House Rackets. I forget the exact year.

The late Lord Galway, then George Monckton Arundell, was in my division. He died in 1943 soon after retiring from the post of Governor of New Zealand. One, Dorman, was another member. I remember him from an incident which occurred with a French master. The latter's pronunciation of English, not perfect, was apt to become less so under the stress of emotion.

Irritated by Dorman one day, he snapped out, "Do fifty loines." The next time the division was 'up' to him he said, "Dorman, have you done your loines?"

"Yes, sir," said Dorman, "I've done my loines."

"I don't say 'loines,' I say 'loines,'" retorted the exasperated Frenchman.

"I said 'loines,'" said Dorman.

This was too much, and a smart blow on the ear was his reward.

White with suppressed emotion Dorman rose slowly to his feet, towering above the poor little Frenchman, and slowly gathered up his books and impedimenta. Then he retrieved his hat.

"Very well, sir," he said icily. "I shall go straight to the headmaster and tell him you have struck me." With that he walked out, leaving his companions gasping with admiration.

The sequel, if any, I fail to recollect.

In one of the lower forms, comprising boys of twelve or so, the desks were long, all in one piece with holes bored at intervals for receptacles holding ink. The bottoms of the inkpots protruded below the desk. The master was not a strict disciplinarian and it was thought that it would be interesting to discover his reactions if at a given moment the inkpots, propelled by a smart smack from closed fingers, were shot into the air. The test was applied and cascades of ink descended on boys, desks, papers and books. It was a silly and messy experiment, against which even the amiability of a weak master was not proof. Most of the division had unpleasant interviews with the Lower master.

Another trick was to suck pieces of blotting-paper and, when these were of the right consistency, flick them with the aid of a penny on to the ceiling above the master's desk, on which, when sufficiently dried by the heat of the room, they fell. What enjoyment could be got out of this pastime, only a small boy could discover.

The late Sir Stephen Gaselee, Librarian of the Foreign Office, was one of the editors of the "*Chronicle*" when I was at Eton. Of those in such exalted circles I knew nothing though he and I were in the same division.

At times, when occasion served, we would go up to Windsor and see a little old Lady drive out in a carriage and pair; or go over the royal apartments, or the stables.

Many distinguished persons visited the school on different

occasions. Of the majority of these, such are the penalties of time, I retain but the vaguest recollection. The Shah of Persia was one, in his conical black hat, white plume and diamond clasp. He secured for us a whole holiday, the chief reason why we welcomed these highly placed personages. I remember a little, old gentleman one Fourth of June, in a top-hat and pale blue tie, who had done so much for his country that even a small boy was conscious of his greatness. He was to do more and be disregarded. I looked, too, at the pale-faced man with the proud, aloof expression to whom he talked, almost equally well known, and in connection with whom an undergraduate's jingle was always associated. I wondered of what they talked, for to learn what Lord Roberts and Lord Curzon had to say to each other might have been of interest. Lord Kitchener came, too, and other great soldiers and sailors, but none so beloved as the little, modest man in the pale blue tie. There were, too, men and women great in the world of literature, art, politics and a dozen other activities, who now are gone with the leaves of autumns long dead, and of whom memories alone survive.

No mention of the Eton of those days would be complete without reference to some of the familiar figures encountered daily. There was an assortment of 'Jobys,' who used to peddle refreshments in baskets and were much patronised by hungry Lower boys. Whether they still exist I do not know, but rather imagine their place has been supplanted by the School stores which were established about the time I left. The Joby I remember best was a broad, rubicund individual in a bowler hat. I may add that on a recent visit to Eton I met this particular Joby, who, I think, must be about eighty-nine. He told me he had an elder brother living.

Then there was 'Fusee,' also in a bowler hat, with his blue eyes and leisurely walk. His advent into a division with slips of paper which he laid silently on the master's desk was always "fraught with interest," as the timid little man remarked to the irate blonde in one of Peter Arno's drawings, for there was always the possibility that one's own name was inscribed, in which case it might be the prelude to an unpleasant interview with the Lower master.



'Fusee' has passed into the shades. So too has the 'Holy Poker' of my day. The Holy Poker, carrying the instrument by which he gained his name, took part in the procession into Upper Chapel preceding the dignitaries who officiated in the services.

Not long ago, to my intense surprise, so lethargically do we acquire impressions of the passing years owing to agglutinated blood and hardening arteries, and not, I may add, due to any intrinsic merit or distinguished service, I found myself in the chair at a dinner of Old Etonians held in a small Northern town. On my left was a distinguished Group Captain in the R.A.F. named Brian Thynne. We had never met before, but after a short conversation discovered we were closely related, for my first cousin, Marjorie Wormald, married his father. He told me that after the lapse of several years the then Holy Poker, who remembered his name immediately, had expressed the conviction that he must be getting old as he could not recall the name of the house at which he had boarded.

The memories of such men, shared by school and club porters, is phenomenal. They scarcely ever make a mistake. Ray de Montmorency, the well-known golfer and master at Eton, once said that to be a successful master this faculty must be cultivated, and no doubt such a cultivation is possible and can be acquired by practice. I knew Monty well. He was, in addition to being a first-class golfer, a good shot who, given the time and opportunities to indulge in sport, would have been in the front rank.

Another well-known figure at Eton was 'Mr. Wilson.' He had officially no connection with the school but was always in evidence, attending every match or function of importance. Clad in a black alpaca coat and a straw boater, he was the butt of all the Lower boys. Eventually, I believe, he passed from the scene of his mundane activities owing to a blow on the head from a cricket ball. This perhaps was not an end to be entirely unexpected, for poor 'Mr. Wilson' had a very thin skull and was not quite all there.

The only distinctions I ever attained were to be 'sent up for good' for drawing, and for taking part in several

matches of the shooting Eight, though I never shot at Bisley nor rose to higher rank in the E.C.R.V. than full private with a good-conduct lozenge on my sleeve. Nor did I ever attend 'camp,' being much too keen to return to my beloved Scotland.

Several incidents, however, in connection with the E.C.R.V. I recall. One was on the occasion of the return of one of the Guards regiments to Windsor. Getting word of this, the commander of our gallant corps conceived the brilliant idea of assaulting this force on the march. He accordingly placed an ambushade at a point which he considered suitable. The enemy being well inside this, he suddenly attacked. So far as my recollection serves, the advance guard consisted of cyclists, and on these a horde of delighted boys, armed with fixed bayonets, fell. Cycles were stripped bare of spokes as these weapons were thrust between the wheels; the vehicles themselves, and their riders, were hurled into the roadside; the whole column was halted, and then to its head galloped an officer, purple in the face, screaming imprecations, demanding from high heaven what the something, something these adjectived boys thought they were doing and who the something, something was responsible for the outrage.

Our C.O. in spiked helmet and gleaming spectacles confronted him. "Oh, sir!" was his only protest, "not in front of the boys!"

Some of the more daring spirits had great fun on field days. The insertion of pellets of tinfoil or a pencil into the barrel of a rifle loaded with blank cartridges, several rounds of which we were allowed on these occasions, produced at times most gratifying results. An umpire's horse, for instance, could be stung up without fear of reprisals. Such occasions, however, were not very frequent. One humorist, possessing a gramophone, secured a record reproducing a series of bugle calls. These, on Monday mornings when we regularly paraded, he was in the habit of playing. As a result startled volunteers could, to his great delight, be observed rushing to the parade ground long before necessity called, screwing spikes into helmets, or in their haste jamming the former into their scalps. Others, half dressed, poured from every doorway, dragging

on their coats; and endeavouring properly to adjust their bayonets in the frogs, or whatever the right word is, attached to their belts.

The humorist to whom I have alluded was a member of a large family remarkable in many ways. I knew him well and felt affection for him. It was he, aided by members of his family, one of whom in the home circle was alluded to by the endearing cognomen of 'Balls,' who harboured resentment against a certain wealthy inhabitant of Park Lane. They conceived the brilliant idea of ringing up all the undertakers and coal merchants whose addresses within a reasonable area they were able to discover in the telephone directory, and ordering them to deliver coals or hearses at a given hour at the above address. The resulting chaos they watched with considerable amusement from a safe coign of vantage in Hyde Park.

Two brothers, whom I knew well after I left Eton, used to indulge their sense of humour to the full. One of their favourite pastimes was to descend from a car in some out-of-the-way village, loaded with surveyors' chains, coloured staves and other impedimenta. These they would set up conspicuously, taking measurements with the chains and putting them down in large notebooks. They then would approach a house with a suitable entry, dragging a chain after them.

"Twenty-three, twenty-four," one would chant in a businesslike voice.

"Twenty-four," would assent his companion, entering the figure ostentatiously.

Then would follow ponderous deliberations.

"I think we'll have the fountain here," one would remark.

The owner, who had been following these colloquies with growing anxiety, would interpose.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," he would ask, "but what is all this about?"

"Yes, the fountain here," pointing to the middle of the passage. "Or perhaps it would be better by the window. Oh! hello! Yes. What is it?"

"What is all this?" the owner would repeat.

"Oh, all coming down," they would reply. "All

coming down! Reconstruction. Office of Works. Office of Works." And off they would go, leaving the wretched owner a prey for days to acute anxiety.

Another favourite game was "Hello, Johnston." In this one brother walked about a hundred yards in front of the other up, say, Bond Street. The first, sighting a likely victim, would suddenly stop with an air of well-simulated surprise and accost him with outstretched hand, exclaiming, "Hello, Johnston!" The latter, pleased at being thus addressed by so debonair and well-favoured a gentleman, would explain somewhat hesitatingly that his name was not Johnston. The joker would then apologise, emphasising with many details how like to his dear old friend Johnston was the gentleman whose promenade had been thus interrupted. They would then part with mutual expressions of goodwill. Before the pseudo-Johnston had recovered completely from the concussion due to this encounter he would meet the second brother.

"Hello, Johnston!" would the latter exclaim, slapping him on the back. "Fancy meeting you like this. Well! how are you?"

By this time the gentleman accosted began to think his name really must be Johnston. Another long explanatory interview would take place. Silly, but quite amusing for the perpetrators.

On one occasion an acquaintance of the two jokers who had heard details of the Johnston programme announced his intention of joining in: "Frightfully amusin'. We'll have a great day." Very much against his participation, they finally had to agree to his company.

All went according to plan at the beginning. The first brother, however, selected a peculiar, tough-looking victim. The second slightly varied his introductory remarks. "Look here," said he, "don't mind me stopping you, but there are two fellows playing a silly game. Did one of them stop you and say 'Hello, Johnston?'"

"Yes," said the tough. "A man stopped me just now."

"Well," said the other, "there's a man coming behind me who'll do the same thing. He's an awful ass. Don't you stand any nonsense."

"Right," said the tough, looking very determined, "I won't."

Fifty yards behind came the acquaintance.

"Hello, Johnston old boy!" he began. It was the last thing he said, for a clip under the jaw knocked off his hat and left him sprawling in the gutter while the gentleman he had accosted strode on with a self-satisfied smile. A case of the biter being bit.

This story reminds me of the unfortunate gentleman who was down in the telephone directory as "Niffy, W. C." He was constantly being rung up by would-be humorists who would start by saying, "Is that W. C. Niffy?" "Yes." "Well, what are you going to do about it?" The account goes on to say that the gentleman's unfortunate wife was compelled to retire to a nursing-home suffering from nervous breakdown, while her husband occupied his leisure moments in procuring the disconnection of his telephone.

The telephone game was popular at one period. It consisted in opening the directory, putting one's finger on a name with eyes shut and then calling the number. On the answering "Hello" the subsequent dialogue went as follows:

"Is that you, So-and-so?"

"Yes. Who's that?"

"Don't you know?"

"No."

"My dear chap, of course you do. Can't you recognise my voice?"

"It isn't Bill (or Tom, or Jack)?"

"Of course it is, you old ass."

Connection having been thus established, the ensuing dialogue was easy and merely consisted in stringing along the hooked fish, adapting one's own remarks to whatever he said, ending up by making fictitious appointments which one could keep or not according to the amount of amusement which might possibly be extracted.

Again very silly, but young people must be silly at times, otherwise it's not much use being young, and a man who never plays the fool at twenty is unlikely to be wise at forty. In fact, the only way in which he can acquire wisdom is by occasionally making a fool of himself. Horace knew a

good deal about human nature. He embodied some of his knowledge in a single phrase when he wrote: "Dulce est desipere in loco."

One of the highlights which come to mind of the days when I was still at school is the funeral of the Grand Old Man, otherwise William Ewart Gladstone, whom I once saw driving through the streets of London. At his funeral in Westminster Abbey the E.C.R.V. formed a guard of honour near the West door. One of a pair of twins, who had had his eye shot out by the other with an arrow, created a slight disturbance by fainting just before the cortège appeared and falling, rifle and all, with a clatter on the kerb. I was so busy presenting or reversing arms, I forget which, that I can recall not a single one of the great men who took part in the proceedings.

Another highlight was a torchlight procession to Windsor Castle in 1897 on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. We rehearsed the songs, specially written for the occasion, the movements of the troops and all sorts of other *et ceteras* until we were heartily sick of them. By careful drilling we, the E.C.R.V., were arranged to form such appropriate sentiments as "God Bless our Home," "Long Life," or "Many Happy Returns" in the courtyard of the Castle. We returned tired, dirty (from the flaming torches, flat tin basins with a wick) and triumphant to our respective houses at a late hour.

To visit Eton "Forty Years On," to quote one of the great songs of the rival establishment, is to undergo very mixed emotions. The streets are full of ghosts. The 4th June, or the Eton and Harrow match at Lord's, is apt to make one, for a few short hours, imagine that time has stood still, save for the fact that all the boys one encounters have an extraordinarily hirsute appearance, the most striking fact about them to the visitor. The atmosphere is nearer the days before the last War than can be gained on any other occasion. How charming are the frocks—is that the right word? How charming are the wearers. The years roll back and we ourselves once again are young, the sun is shining and before us stretch those golden days in which there is so much to be done, such triumphs to achieve, such worlds to conquer.

But who is this portly gentleman advancing towards us with glasses, white hair and a somewhat flushed face, in meek attendance on the formidable lady with the quelling glance and the air of a somewhat battered Juno? It is, it is indeed Morrison minor with whom we shared a canoe at Henley in the early 'nineties when Eton won the Ladies' Plate or, as it was more euphemistically known, the 'Does Saucer.' Can she indeed be the superlative female whom he accompanied, on that same stretch of the silvery Thames, a year or so later, and whom, he confided to his intimates, he hoped and longed to snatch from the bosom of her family? It is. One glance at the pair trailing in the rear, the rather gawky, long-legged flapper and the spotty youth with the snub nose, is enough to confirm such a supposition.

What the thoughts of Morrison minor on suddenly encountering his erstwhile companion, through whose brain race the above conjectures, it is perhaps just as well not to enquire. Enough that they are contemporaries. It has been said that "You cannot beat the Eton gentleman; you cannot equal the Eton cad." Into whichever category he falls, the Old Etonian can at least maintain one truth—he is a member of the greatest Trade Union in the world.



FISHING AND SHOOTING SKETCHES





## IV

### *NAVAL OCCASIONS*

“These men see the works of the Lord.”

Psalm cvii. 24.

I HAVE, in the course of these somewhat random recollections, mentioned the fact that on the occasion of the 1887 Jubilee celebrations I witnessed my first firework display from Southsea beach. Ten years later, on board the “*Enchantress*,” I steamed between the lines of warships, gay with flags and lined by cheering seamen, at the great Naval Review at Spithead. These were not the massive, uniformly grey monsters to which we have in the course of years become accustomed. Their funnels and masts were buff-coloured, with upper works white and hulls black, save for a narrow white stripe above a red waterline. Men o’ war did not, I think, in those days convey to the onlooker that sense of terrific caged power and speed which invests a modern battleship or cruiser. None the less that great fleet of 1897, of which, I suppose, not one single unit now remains, conveyed to those who looked upon it a warning that England was still invincible.

Living at Southsea as I did, anything pertaining to the Royal Navy was to me of paramount interest. My greatest joy was to visit the Dockyard. Down the street one had to go, that same street, not much changed, through which the little man with the empty sleeve and sightless eye had passed on his last journey less than a century before, ere bequeathing to his country a great love-story and a greater tradition. Nor, as the past few years have shown, has the glory of that tradition grown dim. Taken as a whole, no aggregate of human beings can compare with the officers and men of Nelson’s great Service. The ordinary man, born with a love of the sea, can attain to no greater position than to the command of one of His Majesty’s ships, or, if he be above the ordinary, to the control of a fleet. And,

thank God! (or we were indeed undone) after, it is true, many testing years how many there are to whom it is proved that such great and high matters may be entrusted. Therein lies the difference between our race and others. The Germans are hard fighters, great soldiers, great organisers, skilful and experienced tacticians and strategists, but they are not great seamen, and for this we can be thankful. It may seem presumptuous for one such as I to dilate on matters so high, but that any can doubt that the safety of this realm and empire depends in the last event on aught but our Navy and, alas! that so it should have come to pass, on the Royal Air Force, who in those dark days of the Battle of Britain saved not only this land but civilisation itself, seems to me beyond belief. No doubt most of those gay and gallant fighters would, but for the march of time, have been members of the Royal Navy and performing upon the salt waters, instead of in the air, deeds worthy to be compared with those of their forebears in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The personnel of the Royal Navy remains constant in spirit, but its outward appearance has changed since those far-off days when I knew it so intimately. Then, the majority of both officers and men, at any rate the older ones, wore beards—a sight, until the present war, to strike a younger generation with wonder. Each ship, as ships have ever since the first keel was laid, possessed its own characteristics and peculiarities. Slight these might be to the uninitiated eye, but, poring over every book which had a bearing on my passion, I knew then at a glance, as well as their displacement, armament and speed.

It was force of events, not inclination, which parted me from what, hitherto, had been my greatest interest in life. Almost the first thing I ever attempted to write was a short descriptive article entitled “A Trip in a Destroyer”; but soon after the 1897 Jubilee my parents decided to move to London and I, perforce, had to move to London too. We still had our Highland home, and instead of writing about and trying to paint ships I devoted my attention to deer. Sometimes I wonder had this move not taken place if I should have developed into a naval, and not a deer specialist! The sight of a naval uniform still gives me as great a

thrill as does that of a stag, and I am proud to think that I number amongst naval officers some of my greatest friends.

Of these I met many during my years at Southsea; the majority, of course, were much older than myself. I fancy my admiration for the Service must have been born first by those parties in H.M.S. "Vernon"—"the ark of the torpedo school"—to which we looked forward from one year's end to the other. There was a strict age-limit, and the impotent rage which assailed me when informed that this I had reached, still haunts me. How kind to us children were those young naval officers who acted as our hosts; how gently they checked the exuberance of the more boisterous; what a lasting impression their tact and geniality has left on the mind of at any rate one of their guests. But then I have yet to meet the naval officer or man whom all children do not adore. There was dancing at those parties, and games and switchbacks. One could dive one's hand into a tank for pennies and get a mild electric shock. There were marvellous sideshows and amusements. All the little boys and girls went their homeward way in a real boat, on real waves, with real sailors to shield them from harm and the weather, in such a state of delirious happiness that their little minds and talk were full of nothing else for weeks afterwards. "*Oh mihi praeteritos referat si Jupiter annos.*" Alas! it cannot be; the "Vernon" parties, now, are as unattainable as the gardens of the Hesperides.

A friend of mine said to me lately, "How I wish I had kept a diary!" I echoed his aspiration. It is true that such a volume, daily doings set down at the time of which I am writing, would have contained but little of subsequent interest. I do, however, most fervently regret the fact that I did not subsequently record such naval stories as came my way.

There was one, a great favourite of my father's, which I have never forgotten. In an examination paper a young naval officer was asked to describe 'Daniell's Cell.' I am totally ignorant of such technicalities. This particular gadget was some early form of electric battery. Our young friend racked his brains but was entirely lost for a

description. Unwilling to admit defeat, he thereupon delivered himself of the following ingenuous answer:

"History does not relate the exact dimensions of this well-known cell. It is believed to have been twenty cubits long, thirty cubits wide and forty cubits high. It contained Daniel, hence the name. It also contained lions. The lions are dead: Daniel has been removed many centuries. Why therefore rake up old matters? *Sic transit gloria mundi!*"

The penultimate sentence is what always appeals to me.

This recalls the answer of the undergraduate in a Divinity paper who was asked to enumerate the major and minor prophets. Completely stumped, he wrote: "The names of these worthy gentlemen for the moment escape me. A list, however, of the Kings of Israel and Judah may prove of interest." Ingenious but irrelevant.

"In 1894" (several years before I left Southsea) "there were still some masted ships left, relics of the recent past," writes Lord Chatfield in his fascinating book "The Navy and Defence." How glad will his readers be that it is to be followed by a second volume. He goes on: "The young officers and ordinary seamen were still trained in a sailing and training squadron; training brigs still beautified our naval bases," though they were fading into the mists of the past.

The "Majestic" and "Magnificent" were the last word in naval construction in the middle 'nineties. Then, too, the "Powerful" and "Terrible," big four-funnelled cruisers which were our answer to the Russian "Rurik" and "Rossia," caused much discussion.

I remember my dear old drawing-master at Eton, Sam Evans, once telling me that he had seen square-rigged sailing ships, such as those that followed the "Victory," coming into Portsmouth harbour and knocking off the chimney-pots of houses with their yards.

It was in 1895 that the Kiel Canal was completed, and to its opening the Kaiser invited all the navies of the world. A squadron went from this country and in command of one of the battleships—I think H.M.S. "Royal Oak," which formed part of a flying squadron about this time—was Captain Burges Watson, a great friend of my father's.

The latter he asked to accompany him. Needless to say he accepted. I remember how excited we were when he returned. I still have some of the dance programmes and advertisements of the attractions provided for the delectation of foreigners which he brought back.

From my father I inherited my love of the sea, and as a boy I met many distinguished naval officers of high rank whose talk did much to foster this liking. Most particularly do I remember Sir Nowell Salmon, a dear little man who had won the V.C. in the Indian Mutiny. He used to shoot with us in Scotland. I remember once, greatly daring, asking him how he had won this decoration, and the modest way in which he sidetracked my enquiries. So far as I remember, he had climbed up a tree and picked off mutinous sepoys who were attacking our position. Lord Clanwilliam, who had the Portsmouth command, would have stood out in any company, so distinguished did he look. I still recall the large signed photograph showing him in full dress standing on the steps of Admiralty House. Sir Harry Keppel was another naval officer for whom my father had a profound admiration. Admiral Pearson, a great martinet, used to stay with us—indeed, he gave me my first lessons in shooting. A big, bearded man, he was known in the Service as “Pharaoh”—for he would not let the people go—being notoriously sticky in the matter of leave. Captain Hall, later to be famous as Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, Director of Naval Intelligence, was another guest. He died in 1943.

My love of travel, too, I must have inherited from my father, whose chief recreation lay in reading books about distant lands, particularly Africa. I never in those days dreamed that I should ever visit any of those wonderful countries of which we talked. He found it difficult to get away from London for any length of time except in August and September. In the spring, occasionally managing to escape for a few weeks, we used, as I grew older, to go abroad for a brief holiday. Sometimes we went on a cruise, though these voyages were conducted under conditions less luxurious than those which became so popular between 1919 and 1939. At various times we visited Greece, Constantinople, Corinth, Smyrna, Egypt and other

places, all of which filled me with delight and, I hope, broadened my mind. There is nothing so beneficial to a young man as to see the world. He realises, or should realise, the dangers of insularity and is enabled to view contemporary events in more just and interesting perspective.

I remember very little about the majority of individuals I encountered on these excursions. One remains in my mind. We had joined our ship at Marseilles. I was looking over the side, prior to our departure, when a short, squat gentleman, to whom even sand-shoes and a yachting cap failed to lend a nautical appearance, sidled up to me and with a strong Huddersfield accent remarked, "Eh! lad! We're going to be together for three weeks: let's be friends at once!" Young as I was I mistrusted these advances, in which I was right as he turned out to be the ship's bore.

On another occasion, thinking that a voyage would benefit me, I arranged to go to Egypt by sea, where I was to meet my parents, who had travelled overland. On board was a striking-looking young woman with whom I struck up an acquaintance. We arranged to sit at the same table. At the appointed time I seated myself. When my dinner companion at length put in an appearance I received a shock. The colour of her costume, bright scarlet, alone was sufficient to attract attention. The skirt, in addition, reached barely below her knees. The revelation of what, I admit, were limbs sufficiently shapely to warrant such exposure, in those days attracted more adverse comment, particularly from those of her own sex, than in these more sophisticated times. My complexion, all eyes in the saloon being focussed on my new acquaintance, assumed a hue to match her dress. She was, I discovered, the wife of one of my fellow-students at Eton, surprising as this might seem, whose shortcomings, not apparent prior to the abandonment of her career on the stage, she detailed to me with great particularity. A divorce was imminent and I judged it wiser to relinquish any ideas I had formed towards furthering our acquaintanceship. This resolution was considerably fortified at the suggestion that I should advance to her a sum of money which I should have had

considerable difficulty in acquiring for any purpose, apart from a loan to her. She left the ship at Marseilles to my intense relief, as a meeting with my family would have entailed explanations which I felt far from capable of rendering.

It was in 1901 that Admiral (for he had risen in rank) Burges Watson and his wife delighted me with an invitation to visit them in Malta during the winter vacation. He had been appointed Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard and had a charming house overlooking Sliema Creek. To my great joy my parents consented, and one December day I started from the London Docks in a small 3000-ton P. & O. steamer called "Bombay." It was my first real voyage, and sick though I was I revelled in it. "And what did we see, we saw the sea," as the song runs. It was the first occasion, however, on which I had seen the sea. I had seen the anaemic green waters of Spithead, but I had never seen the sea out of sight of land and to me it was a revelation of which I never grew weary. To watch the blue creaming breakers and feel the fresh tang of the sea air on one's face, to envisage the far horizon from the deck of a tall ship, was to experience that indescribable sense of freedom and untrammelled liberty which such a sensation can alone bestow. The night before we reached Malta we ran into rough weather off the coast of Africa. I leaned over the side feeling very ill, though even so I could faintly appreciate the beauty of the scene, lit by a full moon. To me came the old quartermaster intent on administering solace. "This time termorrer night," said he, "you'll 'ave forgotten all this, a-sittin' in the Hopera 'ouse among the swells." The immediate swell was all I was worrying about, but even after so great a lapse of time I still remember his words. I did go to the "Hopera 'ouse," though not the next night, and saw "Aïda." The prima donna was reputed to have had a grown-up son in the Crimean War!

Dear old 'Tig,' as Admiral Burges Watson was known amongst his friends, and Mrs. Tig were kindness itself. How lovable they were and what hosts of friends they had. They kept open house and I met, again, many of the Royal Navy. Tig used to take me, when he had an after-



noon off, mounted on a pony hired from 'Black Saleeba,' to visit the orange groves of San Antonio. Here I used, for sixpence, to consume all the tangerines I liked and stuff my pockets with the surplus for the return journey. Then, too, we used to visit the Auberges of the old Knights of Malta, many of which have suffered in the blitzes through which the island and its defenders have earned such undying fame. To a writer in the "New Yorker" they may be "just a lot of guys," but to us they are facets of "as bright a diamond as shines in the King's Crown." I used always to appreciate the company of men older than myself, and Tig never appeared bored with my views on life, immature as they were, nor my boyish confidences.

Tig had two sailor sons. Young 'Burgoo,' as he was always known, was a 'snotty' in the "Canopus." Arthur Leveson, her commander, a great gunnery expert, later rose to high rank and as Sir Arthur Leveson commanded H.M.S. "Orion," the flagship of the Second Battle Squadron, at the Battle of Jutland. He showed me great kindness when I was in Malta, and when my visit ended he and Tig presented me with a silver-mounted inkpot, with, inset in the lid, a coin of 1793 bearing the name of 'von Hompesch.' He was one of the Knights of Malta, and for some reason which I forget, Arthur Leveson had given me this as a nickname. Their gift is still in daily use. Burgoo, I and some of his shipmates, particularly Alec Wilson, whom later I met in India when he was Flag Lieutenant to the Commodore, Sir George Warrender, Monty Legge and others, used to roam Malta together in search of amusement. We always found it. Alec Wilson was quite mad and a very fine shot.

Years later my wife and I stayed with young Burgoo when he was Flag Captain at Gibraltar. He had a family of three attractive daughters by whom he has now been made a grandfather several times over. Then they were all unmarried. Their father had retired before the present war, and the last time I encountered him was asleep in the lounge of an hotel in the far north *en route* to taking charge of a convoy bound for a North American port.

I loved renewing my acquaintance with the Navy during our stay at Gibraltar. The self-confidence and reliance

which naval men acquire so young always fills me with admiration. There is nothing which they cannot do. No wonder they are universally known as 'handy.'

On one occasion we crossed the Straits to Tangier in a destroyer, and returning I wondered afresh as her commander shot up alongside the quay at a speed which seemed to me marvellous and docked her with less fuss than that with which I should have run a car into a strange garage.

"That was pretty good!" I said tentatively.

"Not very," said he with a grin. "I was about two feet out." Two feet!

Talking of 'handy' men, on one occasion an Eastern potentate had sent home a tiger on board one of His Majesty's ships as a present to some distinguished personage. The rating to whose charge it had been entrusted used to exercise the animal on deck, surrounded by admiring bluejackets. On one occasion it forgot its manners and a certain amount of confusion and noise resulted. When one of the senior officers of the ship enquired as to the unusual uproar, a history of its misdeeds was recounted.

"Well, where is the beast now?" he asked.

"The man in charge is rubbing its nose on the deck," was the reply.

To go back to Malta, the winter dances when the fleet was in harbour were great fun, and to them came officers of all ranks. Sir John Fisher was in command at that time; Lord Charles Beresford was also in Malta, and these great men I used to admire from a respectful distance. At one dance, failing to find my partner I was hurriedly charging in and out of the ballroom when I cannoned into a large expanse of white waistcoat surmounting a pair of naval trousers. "Sorry!" I exclaimed, my glance travelling upwards. It went on travelling and after an appreciable time encountered the shattering glare of a pair of piercing eyes beneath which stretched a large black beard and moustache. They belonged to Prince Louis of Battenberg, whose handsome and dominating presence would have scared almost anyone let alone an insignificant undergraduate. A great man and a great seaman, he suffered much injustice at the hands of his fellow-countrymen.

The year following my visit, Tig was to have been Second-in-command of the Mediterranean Fleet and I left Malta cheered by the thought that he had invited me to join him on a cruise. Alas! it was not to be. A few months after my departure he caught Malta fever, as this illness was then known, and died. He was buried on the island and I mourned the loss of one who, though so much older, had honoured me with his friendship and whose loss I feel to this day. Mrs. Burges Watson was granted apartments in Hampton Court Palace, and there my wife and I visited her on several occasions. Much as I loved her, it was never the same without Tig.

My connection with the Royal Navy is not, however, entirely severed, for my daughter is now serving in the W.R.N.S.

## V

### A PLAYGOER'S MEMORIES

"The best in this kind are but shadows."

"Midsummer Night's Dream," Act v, Scene i.

"THEATRICAL reminiscence," writes Sir Max Beerbohm, "is the most awful weapon in the armoury of old age." May I be forgiven for my presumption! I have had, however, so much enjoyment from the perusal of such that I hope my readers will look on this chapter with a lenient eye.

The theatre has always had a great fascination for me. In part I trace it to the fact that close to our home in Scotland is a delightful summer cottage which was once occupied by Arthur Lewis, a very charming and interesting man who had married Kate Terry. I often used to see her and knew her daughters well though I was only a school-boy. Many of the older generation of theatre-goers considered that she, as an actress, surpassed her more famous sister. Her eldest daughter, Kate, is the mother of Val and John Gielgud; her youngest, Mabel Terry-Lewis, is still, I am glad to say, leading an active and busy life. In addition to her screen work she is a talented miniature-painter, possesses a keen sense of humour and an acute and critical mind. Had she not decided to marry just at the time when she had made a great stage success in, I think, "The Gay Lord Quex," she would be even better known.

The very earliest recollection I have of anything connected with the theatre was when I was taken to a reading of Dickens's "Christmas Carol" given by Sir Squire Bancroft in the Town Hall at Portsmouth. I am glad now that I went, though acutely bored at the time. I liked the striking-looking old gentleman with wavy silver hair (all people with white hair look old to a child!) and the beautiful voice. I was frequently to see him many years afterwards with his shiny top-hat, ebony-rimmed eye-glass and gold-mounted cane stepping along Piccadilly

on his way to the Albany. But what I wanted to see in those far-off days was Poole's World-famed Myriorama! I cannot, now, recollect its component parts. I remember large pieces of scenery which filled the entire stage, before which, if the subject was nautical, large ships passed to and fro. There were battles and many other exciting incidents. Their details I have forgotten. I wish that I had kept a programme, as was my invariable habit in after years.

My next theatrical event was "The Mikado," staged by amateurs. This must have been in the late 'eighties. I do not remember very much about it except that I was immensely attracted by one of the 'Three Little Maids.' She was plump and dark and some ten years older than myself. This did not prevent my experiencing a feeling of deep mortification and temper when, subsequent to the performance, she was annexed by one of the dashing naval officers who thronged the audience. I was fobbed off with a sister who was nothing like so attractive!

Then there came a lull. The scene changed to Edinburgh, in those days before cheap tailors and sixpenny stores had ruined Princes Street, the most beautiful of cities. Outside the hotel in which we were staying I noticed a large crowd. Investigating this with the enthusiasm of youth, I became aware of a sombre and menacing figure, crowned by a large black hat, beneath whose brim peered deep-set eyes shielded by glasses, advancing towards me. I huddled back, gaping. The figure strode past. It was Henry Irving. He did not, as I should like to record, attracted by my look of childish wonder, stoop down, pat me on the head and press a sovereign into my hand. If he gave me a thought, which was most unlikely, he probably speculated on the quickest method of 'outing' the squint-eyed little brute who was blocking his path.

I wonder how many actors, stage as distinct from screen, would draw a crowd in front of an Edinburgh hotel nowadays?

These were the great days of the theatre. In "London Town," by J. B. Booth, the author writes: "Irving is at the Lyceum, Tree at Her Majesty's; Alexander announces a new play at the St. James's; Wyndham and Mary Moore are playing in Henry Arthur Jones's latest piece at

the Criterion; Harrison and Maude have produced a costume drama at the Haymarket; George Edwardes' productions are at the Gaiety and Daly's, and Penley is at the Globe. These managements were fixed and stable. . . ." He goes on: "The change in the theatrical world may be summed up in two announcements: 'Lyceum—Sole lessee and manager, Henry Irving,' and 'Any Theatre of To-day—Lessee, Mr. Jones. Under the management of Messrs. Thomson and Robinson. Messrs. Smith and Williams, by arrangement with Messrs. Snooks and Abrahams, present the great American success *Yes, Sir, that's my Baby!*'" That such changes are for the better, inevitable though they may be, no one who lived in the palmy days will admit. With the passing of the great theatrical managers there went something that the stage will never regain until they reappear.

Irving I saw in many of his famous plays: "The Bells" (who that ever heard him can forget that whisper, "The bells!"?); "The Merchant of Venice," in which he showed the Jew as an imposing and dignified figure winning unwilling sympathy as he made his silent, utterly silent, return to the house which his daughter had left; "The Lyons Mail," in which play the moment that I best recollect is his entry as the innocent Lesurques after the arrest of the villain Dubosc. The latter has been exulting in the downfall of his victim, watching from an attic window the passing of the tumbrils. Then, as the door crashes open, he is hidden for a moment, which gave an opportunity for the actor to change to the part of Lesurques. The look of conscious triumphant innocence which Irving managed to convey without speaking was remarkable. Then there was "Charles I," the touching scene with his children, the way in which he said "Remember" as he went to his death. He looked exactly like the pictures of the king. One of his best parts was that of Corporal Gregory Brewster in "A Story of Waterloo" adapted from Conan Doyle's "A Straggler of '15." The old broken-down Waterloo veteran is sitting in his chair and starts to tell the story of the battle. He is half childish, but gradually life comes back to the stricken frame. He becomes erect. The years roll back and he lives again in the past. His

form fills. His voice grows stronger. He rises to his feet as the words ring out, clear and strong: "The Guards want powder—and by God! they shall have it."

Like another great man, whom I am glad to say I knew, F. C. Selous, and also Walter Winans who fell dead as he flashed past the winning post, Irving's end was not unfitting.

Tree was not a great actor in the sense that Irving was, but it would be ungrateful to fail in remembering the many beautiful productions with which he has enriched one's memories. Of all those I saw, that which lingers as the loveliest was the garden scene in "Twelfth Night." Here was embodied the fragrant tenderness of all gardens. Who, too, that saw it will ever forget "The Darling of the Gods" with its haunting little air?

"Illusion," said Tree, "is the first and last word of the stage; all that aids illusion is good, all that destroys illusion is bad." He seldom failed to live up to his dictum.

Miss Lena Ashwell in "Myself a Player" seems to me to sum up Tree's capabilities when she writes: "He, unlike Irving and Wyndham, had never been through the mill and remained in many ways an amateur. . . . He was a most remarkable showman, and his sense of character made him always interesting, but never inspiring. . . . He was difficult to act with, for his emotion never felt sincere and he was always liable to clown, but he was startlingly inventive as a stage director. Little touches of 'business' were invariably right and poignantly effective."

Those who saw plays produced by him will remember such instances. The introduction of the deer-hound in "Richard II," when the dog leaves the side of the defeated king and walks slowly across the stage to the triumphant Bolingbroke after the battle of Bosworth, was one. Another little touch was the orange filled with spices which Wolsey lifts to his nostrils in "Henry VIII." Such instances could be largely multiplied. His death as Svengali in "Trilby" was original. He fell backward across a table so that the audience saw his face upside down, his staring eyes looking horribly into space.

Talking of him reminds me of an amusing incident which occurred at His Majesty's during the production of

"The Tempest." Ariel, unless my memory plays me false, was embodied by Miss Viola Tree. In one scene she 'flew' across the stage suspended from a wire. The audience at Tree's 'bee-utiful theatre' were always extremely highbrow. For this reason their susceptibilities were the more shocked at the loud exhortation of a sporting-minded philistine who from the centre of the stalls suddenly shouted, "Mark that bird. It's got a leg down."

Apart from 'staging,' the whole art of acting, broadly speaking, is, I imagine, the power to convey to the audience a correct impression of a character under certain given conditions. The more vivid and true to life such an interpretation, the more lasting will be its impression on the mind of the spectator. When we are unconscious of the art through which such an interpretation is transmitted, when, in fact, the illusion is perfect, it is either said, "So-and-so wasn't acting at all, he was absolutely natural"; or, if the spectator has given the matter any thought, "What a superb piece of acting!"; for good acting does not come as naturally as all that. To realise how much study, experience and knowledge are needed to maintain an illusion of this kind on the stage it is only necessary to see an interpretation given by one who has not studied, has no experience and ventured very little thought on his career. That is why it is nearly always possible to detect when a screen player has had stage experience. How often the remark is heard, "I am sure I could act." The person making it believes it, genuinely, to be true, but to be certain of the fallacy underlying such a remark one need only consider the number of stage-struck aspirants who fail. Yet they must all at some time or another have considered that they were bound to achieve fame.

There is a craze now, or so it seems to me on my rare visits to a play, for 'natural' acting. 'Natural' acting was first introduced into the theatre by the distinguished and extremely businesslike gentleman whom I have already mentioned, Sir Squire Bancroft, and his wife. It was not really 'natural' acting at all. It was highly skilled acting which gave the impression of being natural. Acting is a great art, though an ephemeral one. Too often the desire



to be a natural actor is an excuse for a lack of study and hard work. It may on occasions deceive, just as so-called impressionism may conceal a lamentable lack of draughtsmanship. Sir Gerald du Maurier often appeared not to be acting at all. The uninitiated might at times be forgiven for supposing that Augustus John had not troubled much with a picture. Try and do the same. How great was du Maurier's art was apparent in such scenes as that in "Dear Brutus" when he suddenly realises that he has, in fact, no daughter; or in "Arsène Lupin" when, having got to his room only just in time to forestall the detective, Guerchard, played by Dennis Eadie, he comes out brushing his hair, outwits his cross-examiner and then, as the latter leaves the room, falls exhausted. One of the great drawbacks to an evening in a modern theatre is the slovenly manner in which so many modern actors and actresses mumble their lines. At their best they may be compared to competent amateurs. They are so 'natural' that it is impossible to hear a word they utter. The acoustic properties of some of the modern theatres may be bad (the buildings may not even look like theatres!), but too many of those who play in them make not the slightest effort to be audible. They slur their lines, they seldom open their mouths, they drop their voices, they turn their backs whilst so doing on the audience; and the latter, who have, after all, paid for their evening's amusement, not infrequently go home wondering what it was all about. When players who have really learned their jobs by hard work come on the stage and speak it is like a breath of fresh air. The old style of acting had its faults. It might be attacked as being unreal, declamatory and completely untrue to life, but it had one great advantage; it could be heard. It was possible, at least, for the audience to gather what the play was about.

Actors and actresses in earlier days, such as Keans, were the servants of the public. They were not infrequently so reminded. Sir Henry Irving was not ashamed so to call himself, and many other distinguished actor managers I have more than once heard refer to themselves in such terms. It would be well, at times, if some of our modern young men and women could be reminded of the fact.

The best stage voices I ever heard were those of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson and Lewis Waller. I saw the latter in many plays, but contemporary theatre-goers will always remember him best in "Monsieur Beaucaire."

Judged by the standards of the higher critics such may not have been good plays, but they were plays we loved. Favourite plays we all of us have and favourite players, nor does our choice always depend on the absolute merit of either. "Sweet Nell of Old Drury" was not a very good play, but I should enjoy seeing it again with Fred Terry, the possessor of another lovely voice, and Julia Neilson in their prime. "English Nell," a much better play, produced almost at the same time, had nothing like a similar charm. Fred Terry had a wonderful make-up with a false tip to his nose. In one scene he soliloquised to a King Charles spaniel which sat on a table by his side. "Of all my friends I love you best," he began, and put his face down to the dog. The latter made a snap and Terry hastily drew back, but not before the dog had nipped off the false end to his nose, leaving a round white spot. I could see it clearly, though few others noticed the mishap as the actor cleverly used his laced handkerchief to cover his face until the end of the scene. He was a splendid Charles. No wonder the ladies loved his prototype. Charles, whatever his faults and weaknesses, was a great gentleman and, in many respects, a great king. I am not on familiar terms with many bishops. One there is whom to know is to love. We were talking of Charles and I made some allusion to his weakness for the opposite sex. My companion responded with a comment which I think the king would have liked to hear. "Yes," he said, thoughtfully, "but he was very faithful to them all."

There were, too, in those days, in addition to the legitimate theatres, music halls, and though they differed from the original music halls they provided a form of entertainment the disappearance of which many of my generation view with regret. The Empire, Alhambra and Tivoli were the most characteristic.

One encountered some extraordinary individuals in the Empire. Especially I remember one youth who for some reason best known to himself elected to appear in a large

gold imitation white tie (I do not know how else to describe the article) studded with diamonds. He was followed about by a horde of young men making facetious remarks which he did his best, without any success, to ignore, and eventually left.

It was here, too, that on one occasion I met T. W. H. Crosland, author of "The Unspeakable Scot," a book which roused a storm of criticism. Trevor Wignall in "Never a Dull Moment" quotes some lines of his which, if he intended them for his own epitaph, he adds, could not have been improved upon:

If I should ever be in England's thoughts after I die,  
Say "There are many things he might have bought  
And did not buy.  
Unhonoured by his fellows, he grew old and trod the path to hell;  
But there were many things he might have sold  
And did not sell."

He was a disappointed man with a touch of greatness.

The music halls, even when I was a boy, retained one attribute which was essentially of the old England. They were real and they had gusto, and as Sir Max Beerbohm in his fascinating reminiscences remarked, "Gusto is a great virtue." "The virus of variety," to use his phrase, crept in. The shadow of doom was upon them.

Another form of entertainment was to be found at Earl's Court. A fine night was needed, for many of its attractions were in the open. There were, when I remember it, the water-chute and a scenic railway, tame affairs, so I was to discover in a few years' time, compared with those at Coney Island. Then there was the Maze. Presiding over this was a gentleman in a sort of crow's nest who shouted directions to those irretrievably lost. On one occasion, it may have been Boat Race night, a party of revellers were stuck. The presiding deity, through his megaphone, began to issue directions. These, to the party concerned, seemed tinged with superfluity. The Maze, being constructed of three-ply or some such substance, was not calculated to withstand a direct assault. To the horror of the custodian, confined aloft in the crow's nest, they proceeded to advance in a direct line to the outlet indicated, the walls of the Maze falling before them as did the walls of Jericho at

the blast of the Israelitish trumpets. By the time they had achieved the exit the Maze, or that portion of it which they encountered, was a wreck.

The approach to the Exhibition, which was always very much the same in main essentials though its nomenclature varied annually, was through a long glass-covered tunnel. The chief attraction from our point of view, traversing this golden road, was the fact that situated on the route were various booths. In one of these, we discovered, could be purchased coloured feathers, ballasted with small lead weights, terminating in burrs. Their chief object was to advertise some particular brand of toffee. Thrown with reasonable aim they attached themselves to any fairly coarse surface, and we derived a good deal of simple amusement by affixing these missiles to the coats of various pedestrians. Acquiring a supply, we extended our activities elsewhere and carried them on our excursions into various haunts of fashion. There was a certain club-owner noted for his social aspirations, whose favourite hymn was No. 231 and whose idea of Heaven, it was said, was to be seated on a sofa between two Duchesses. Him we particularly disliked. Observing this gentleman taking an airing in Hyde Park at a fashionable hour on a Sunday, we proceeded to 'feather' him until he resembled a somewhat decrepit canary; for yellow was our favourite colour, being more conspicuous than less brilliant hues. Continuing his promenade, to the undisguised amusement of the onlookers, he was at length, to our great disgust, accosted by an officious but well-meaning little girl, who pointed out to him the condition of his back view. Clawing wildly over his shoulder with one hand, alternately endeavouring to dislodge the feathers clinging to his coat below, he was assisted by the child, while we subsided in a nonchalant manner into two of the green park chairs and watched the proceedings.

Another side-show at Earl's Court was always similar in character whatever the change in name. One year it was "A Trip to the Polar Regions"; the next, "A Voyage up the Amazon." The procedure was the same. You embarked at a landing-stage, having paid your shilling, in a small flat-bottomed vessel. The attendant, in furs,

South American trappings, or whatever was suitable at the moment, released the latter and you set forth on your voyage, carried by the current which flowed between planks and hoardings sufficiently wide just to carry the craft. Whirling sedately along, you at intervals descried ice-floes, complete with bears, penguins, seals, etc., Northern Lights; or, in the alternative, jungles, strange botanical effects, villages, or whatever Mr. Imre Kiralfy's artists imagined constituted the most prominent features of South American scenery. On the occasion which I best recollect the scenery was devoted to the Arctic. We had in our party an ebullient young woman who decided that she had not inspected the snowy and ice-covered wastes surrounding us in sufficient detail. She, therefore, arresting our voyage by the simple expedient, aided by other willing hands, of holding tightly to an ice-floe, clambered out on to a berg whilst we kept the vessel at anchor. The ice-floe, being constructed of the most flimsy materials, was unable to sustain her weight. Sinking through the outer snow she crashed through several yards of scenery, whilst the narrow conduit behind our craft gradually became congested with a succession of similar vessels occupied by total strangers. The pressure did not conduce to the safety of our anchorage and, eventually becoming too great, accompanied by many parting injunctions, we were compelled to abandon the adventurous explorer. What explanations eventually soothed the directors, who were justly incensed, I have forgotten. I know that at first they contemplated action on the ground of damage, to which the lady retorted that the voyage was far from safe and that 'wheels and things,' presumably connected with the working of the flow of water which made practicable the journey, were whizzing round within an inch of her legs whilst embedded on the ice-floe, putting her in imminent danger of being permanently crippled. She had a versatile and ingenious mentality and got out of it somehow or other; but it was a long time before we visited the Arctic Regions again.

Though we enjoyed 'straight' plays, music halls and Earl's Court, our hearts were in truth given to musical comedy. Four, at least, were usually running simultaneously. They were not overburdened with plot but they

provided tuneful music, pretty girls, extravagant situations and love-scenes.

We have all seen love-making on the stage, some good and some very bad. Each individual actor has his own method. I am not one of those who have an admiration for the lover who regards the lady of his choice as an edible commodity. One very well-known actor, highly regarded by many, used to make love on the stage as if he had starved for months. Proceeding to munch his way up the arm of the lady he admired in a series of savage bites, which must have been very painful, he invoked the owner of the limb in question, alternately with that of the Deity, in a series of half-audible asides.

Sir Seymour Hicks, as he now is, pursued very different methods. His love-scene with Zena Dare in "The Catch of the Season" I have always regarded as the best I ever witnessed. Alone with her in a ballroom, he hardly said a word, but just took her hand, murmured a few broken, disjointed syllables and looked at her. You felt that if you were the girl you would be his for life. No one but a very finished actor could have conveyed his feelings as he did. In comparison, Rudolph Valentino would have appeared a navvy armed with a sledgehammer. But then, even in those days Sir Seymour had forgotten more about acting than the majority of his contemporaries had ever learned.

I have not been to a musical play for years. When I was younger I used to wonder why some of my elders, and I am sure betters, appeared bored at musical plays which to me were the acme of delight. I fancy, now, I know the reason. They were comparing them, perhaps unconsciously, with memories of their youth. I think, at any rate, that is why I have been bored with the few modern musical plays I have seen, excellent though many of them no doubt were. The young ladies display the greater part of their anatomies unclothed. Bare limbs, the exposure of which would never have been permitted forty years ago, are so predominant that they are taken as a matter of course. Such exposure is not alluring; it is not even suggestive. These modern shows move with a rapidity and slickness which leaves one gasping. There is no time

to assimilate one impact before the next stuns you. The dancers flash and whirl; hot rhythm and jazz crash and bellow; wisecracks crackle with the rapidity of machine-gun fire; for quiet enjoyment there is not a moment to spare, and crushed and battered I crawl out.

The High Priest of musical comedy was George Edwardes, and at its altars, the Gaiety and Daly's, did the youth of the day worship. Engaged in the completion of my education at Oxford, it was only during the vacation that there I could lay my offerings in the shape of tickets for the stalls. However, even at Oxford we were not entirely neglected and to its theatre came travelling companies with the latest London success.

Suitable floral tributes to their charms did the ladies receive, nor were bouquets the only offerings handed across the footlights. I have, on occasions, seen not only these, but stockings, a pair of stays, and if you want to know what these accessories looked like in 1900 examine an old advertisement of the London Corset Co., they were formidable affairs; boxes of chocolates, of course; a live hen, which bounced off the head of the conductor and ricocheted with loud squawks on to the stage; a kitten, and a live monkey. On the Saturday night of a musical comedy it was customary for the leading lady to make a speech. Not marvels of elocutionary eloquence, there was a certain similarity of expression in the thanks delivered by these charming—for I am sure they were charming though I never personally met any of them—ladies. They usually ran something as follows:

"Dear boys"—deafening applause during which the speaker was quite overcome—"I don't know how to thank you for your wonderful reception." Loud cries of "Yes, you do"; "Darling, I love you"; "Give me a kiss" from young gentlemen the majority of whom did not know the lady and would have been overcome with shyness had they ever met. "My heart is too full for words. Dear boys, I thank you." Renewed and prolonged applause, during which the lady retired gracefully, kissing both hands.

On the particular night which witnessed the presentation of the monkey, things did not go quite according to schedule. The lady to whom it had been presented stood

there grinning and cuddling the little beast on her bare shoulder. She started off all right with her speech and had got as far as "Dear boys, I don't know how to thank you," when the monkey, whose constitution, owing to its tender years, was not sufficiently strong to stand so much excitement in one evening, solved the difficulty for her. With a scream of dismay she shot into the wings, the monkey clinging lovingly round her neck and frustrating all efforts of the leading gentleman, who made gallant attempts to dislodge it.

What, I sometimes wonder, has happened to all those players and audiences of so long ago? What fate has befallen the photographs, signed for the most part in large, sprawling, illiterate characters, which used to adorn the mantelpieces of those undergraduates whose hearts were conscious of the first stirrings of romantic adventure? Do they still exist, tucked away, forgotten, in some dusty drawer, or have they perished as did the emotions they once evoked? Do the Judges of His Majesty's High Court, the Governors of His Dependencies, Members of Parliament, important owners of large businesses, distinguished military officers, dignitaries of the Church, staid country gentlemen, fathers of families and Justices of the Peace, ever give a thought to those halcyon days, when geese were swans and all the trees were green? No one but themselves, or possibly their wives, can say.

It must have been in the late 'nineties that, greatly daring, I took for myself a seat in the dress circle for a matinée at the old Gaiety. The entrance was where now stands Marconi House. Not until in the early years of the present century, towards the end of the run of "The Toreador," did the Gaiety company, introduced by "The Linkman or Old Gaiety Memories," move to their new home, which has now gone the way of its predecessor. Every theatre then had a character of its own. The Gaiety was unique. The play which I went to see that afternoon so long ago was "The Runaway Girl," the last of the famous Gaiety Girls, The Shop Girl, The Circus Girl, etc. Very sweet she was, too, as portrayed by Ellaline Terriss, who shortly afterwards left the company to appear in plays by her husband, not then 'Sir' Seymour Hicks. I can see



now the steep flight of stairs, red-carpeted, the banks of ferns, the gilt, the large mirror at the end of the corridor, even the seat I occupied. I hear again the tuning of the orchestra before the overture and feel the thrill which I experienced as the curtain rose on 'Corsica—A wood near the Convent of St. Pierre.' For I had never in my life before been alone to a theatre. The whole adventure was as exciting and mysterious as every adventure should be. The rise of the curtain heralded me into a new world, a world of beautiful girls, bright costumes, blue skies and blue seas, on which the sun shone, and on whose shores stood white houses, sheltered from the glare by gay awnings. They were all unknown to me then, even by name, those figures who moved about the stage, and who, afterwards, across the footlights, I got to know so well. Beyond a few casual meetings I never knew any of the old Gaiety company personally, but even now I look back on them as dear friends. How many happy hours have they given me in those careless days that have gone. In a daily paper the comment was made not long ago that it seemed surprising that so many of the old audiences had kept the programmes of performances at Daly's and the Gaiety. It may seem strange to a succeeding generation. Not to us. They are the only tangible links we have with the past.

Even before the demolition, quite recently, of the new Gaiety, the name meant nothing. The theatre was in its latter days just a theatre like any other. Forty years ago it was an institution, as fixed and permanent as so many other things seemed to us in our ignorance, though even then the first shadows were throwing a dimness across the future which seemed so golden.

In the vestibule 'the Duke of Connaught,' or so we called him, from a fancied resemblance, stood ready to take our tickets. It was years ere I discovered that this immaculately dressed old friend was, by day, occupied in a department of the Army and Navy Stores. He, our vouchers taken, handed us on to a little red-nosed, shock-headed man whose name I never discovered. After polite enquiries as to our health we were escorted to our seats, passing on the way another old friend popularly and quite

untruthfully reported to be the mother of one of the loveliest actresses on the musical comedy stage. Our seats were always near the front "so as not to miss anything," and there for three hours of solid enjoyment we sat, no worries, no responsibilities and nothing to do but be happy. And happy we were. No one could have glanced round the white-waistcoated, white-shirted rows of stalls and doubted it. Whether we were in Biarritz, Nice, Cairo, Villaya or any other of the delectable sun-drenched spots to which we were taken, we were happy.

But all that happened after I had had my first meeting with "The Runaway Girl." Then for the first time I saw Teddy Payne, in a box-cloth coat and enormous buttons, trying in vain to hide his terror as the fatal tune fell on his ears, while he strove to steady the enormous slice of melon which his trembling fingers scarcely could hold. Then, too, I saw Connie Ediss, something of a Rabelaisian smack about all her utterances given in that fat unctuous voice; Katie Seymour, surpassing even Gertie Millar in the lightness and daintiness of her dancing; and the beautiful and stately creatures, headed by Maie Saqui (looking, if not like a Duchess, what I thought a Duchess ought to look like!), all in long skirts, which in no way hindered high kicks and graceful gyrations, little short of marvellous. And how much more attractive were the dresses and draperies clothing the lovely figures of those ladies than are the scanty snippets which reveal rather than cover the masses of naked flesh which now, too often, are presented as an attraction in modern stage spectacles.

It was in "The Messenger Boy" that I saw a thin, rather nervous young man, taking the part of Cosmos Bey in his first Gaiety piece, played originally by E. J. Lonnen. His name afterwards became identified with the Gaiety, and though at the end of his career he may, to the jeunesse dorée of that generation, have seemed past his first youth, to me there seemed very little difference between the George Grossmith of 1899 and 1935. To him, poor Lionel Mackinder was an admirable foil. Though over age, when the dark days of 1914 came he dyed his hair, went out to the Front almost at once and was the first actor of any note to be killed. He had married Gracie Leigh.

Of them all, only Robert Nainby is still left. He always took the part of a foreigner, a waiter, a count, a conspirator, it did not matter which, and with him Teddy Payne was almost always sooner or later embroiled. They had a splendid duel in "The Orchid." Others were Harry Grattan, nimble and agile as the Governor of Villaya in "The Toreador"; Arthur Hatherton, the Registrar in the "Spring Chicken"; and Fred Wright, whom I last saw with Madge Lessing in a music hall in Berlin in 1914. He was a most beautiful dancer. Indeed, in "The Messenger Boy" he gave the best *pas seul* I have ever seen. A small man, the brother of Huntley Wright who always took the comedian's parts at Daly's, as Captain Pott in this play he was made up like Captain Kettle, Cutcliffe-Hyne's famous creation, white ducks, red torpedo beard, and cigar. It is impossible to describe a dance of this sort, but all those who remember it will, I am sure, agree with what I have said.

Much of the modern male dancing of recent years is a very different sort of affair. It may be very clever and artistic, but for me it has but little charm. Teddy Payne dancing a *pas seul* always reminded me of a stage child. He appeared to be in deep thought. His lips moved as though he were counting, and his eyelids blinked rapidly all the time. Dear little man! He was always the same but we never wanted him to be any different. It was said that in his early days he had heard that J. L. Toole always made up in the same way no matter what character he played, and determined to follow so good an example.

"He was a great laughter-maker," said one of his obituary notices, and there are few better epitaphs. It was impossible to watch him and not laugh. I hardly ever heard him gag, but I very frequently saw him with the giggles; and if before he had made one laugh, in this condition he reduced one to hysteria. Perhaps that, in part, was the secret of the feeling of intimacy which existed at the Gaiety between the audience and the players. Everyone seemed to be enjoying life, and to want us to enjoy it too. We laughed with them—not at them.

Of the ladies who used to appear in the Gaiety pieces, Connie Ediss, of course, stood first and foremost. What-

ever changes might be made in the heroine's part, so long as she appeared it did not much matter. There were plenty of young and pretty girls, but there was but one Connie Ediss. The only person to approach her in later years was Maisie Gay. The latter, perhaps, had more humour. Her burlesque pantomime song "England is Proud of You" was a gem, and as sung by her one of the funniest that I have ever heard, but she had not quite Connie Ediss's attraction. The latter appealed to one's heart, however ridiculous the situation, and when she made a remark such as "I do like a boy who's good to his mother," one somehow felt that she really meant it.

"Oh! I love Society" was one of her best songs; "Fancy Dress" was another; and her burlesque love-duet with Teddy Payne, "The Cuckoo is calling aloud to its mate," in "The Orchid," was extraordinarily funny.

Should we think them as lovely now as we did then, those lovely ladies who filled the Gaiety stage? I fancy so.

Queenie Leighton, who died only last year aged seventy-one, with her beautiful figure and flashing eyes, betrothed to the great Carajola:

If round your neck you should feel  
Lily-white arms softly steal,  
Would you object a great deal?

and Teddy Payne's ecstatic expression as he self-consciously replied

Oh, no! Not me.

Rosie Boote, as full of vitality and courage as in the magnificent painting of her by Orpen, singing "The Soldiers in the Park"; Marie Studholme, with her infectious smile and her wonderful complexion—"Gay, kind and lovely," she died not very long ago. Violet Lloyd, with whom I think Teddy Payne was at his best; Ethel Sydney; Gabrielle Ray, a beautiful dancer; and, of course, Gertie Millar, whose dancing was the poetry of motion. Florrie Ward, who with G. G. introduced the cake-walk, and Kitty Mason, without whose *pas seul* in the second act no Gaiety piece was complete. Jean Aylwin, a Scots girl, was a lovely creature with beautiful blue eyes—with whom as leading ladies of the chorus were Irene

Desmond, Olive May, dark, piquant and petite, and Julia James, who married a Frenchman.

The Gaiety pieces were all built on the same model. The names of the characters varied; the locality was changed and the music (and how tuneful was the music compared to the hot jazz, the braying of saxophones and the raucous howls which appear to delight modern audiences!), but in essentials all the plays were similar. There was invariably a heroine accompanied by a girl friend; the hero with his companion who paired off with the other two in the last act; various minor characters, and parts for Connie Ediss and Teddy Payne. There were always two acts and three or possibly four scenes. Even the chorus, male and female, seldom altered. Any change in the personnel was instantly noted by habitués.

Payne and G. G. were splendid together. There was always one song which gave them the opportunity of appearing in different characters. Of these, the best was "The East End and the West."

PAYNE. Suppose you're at a play you've witnessed  
Several times before,  
The music is a chestnut

G. G. And the comic man a bore (P. indignantly, "I beg yer  
pardon!"),  
Then study with attention from the box  
In which you sit  
The jeunesse dorée in the stalls

PAYNE. And Tommy in the pit. (They sit, one behind the other.)

G. G. (talking languidly and loudly, back row of stalls). Ha! ha!  
dear old Mabel's looking splendid to-night. This is the sixty-  
second time I've seen this piece.

P. (front row of pit). I don't think I shall ever see it. Is the curtain  
up, Liza? (Assumes an air of pained boredom and sits back  
dejectedly.)

G. G. The last time I was here I didn't enjoy it a bit. There was a  
Johnny in front of me talking at the top of his voice all the way  
through. Oh! *do* listen to this, Lady Mary—this bit's awfully  
good. That amusing chap with the red nose finds out that the  
girl who has gone off with the long-haired fellow is his wife, and  
of course he looks an awful ass. Ha! ha!

P. (rising, and leaning on the back of the stall). You'll pardon me,  
me young fellow, but could you tell me what becomes of the  
ba-by? (Cries of "Sit down." P. looking round and muttering  
"Sit down yourself!", reseats himself. Sulkily gazing at the  
back of G. G.'s head he appears resigned and begins to munch

a bun, slowly and carefully. Then, suddenly attracted by something on the stage, he sits up guffawing loudly, while fragments of bun shoot forward all over G. G.'s immaculate hair.)

Both rising. In the east end and the west end  
They will snivel at the sentiment  
And chortle at the jest.  
If you're running a The-ay-tre  
You will find you have to cater  
For the east end and the west.

G. G.'s entrance, too, in "The Toreador," always my favourite, was typical. Immaculately dressed he strolled into Susan's flower-shop and was presented with a button-hole.

G. G. Everything points to this being a flower-shop. That's marvelously like a buttonhole. Is that meant for me? Thanks very much and so forth. Don't ask me for any money or I shall get peevish. I'll send you round a cheque in the morning.

Then entered Lionel Mackinder in search of him and they made strained conversation.

MACKINDER. Is your mother entertaining this season?

G. G. Not very. As a matter of fact, I'm rather worried. You may as well know. It's about a girl. A dear little soul I met in an hotel in Dresden. I rescued her from a fire. She was in her dressing-gown.

M. Pink?

G. G. No. Blue. Oh! it was maddening. I've followed her here. She's going to be a bridesmaid.

From dialogue of this sort the astute Gaiety-goer could easily forecast such songs as "The Language of the Flowers" or "Cora" sung by Gertie Millar. The first time that I saw G. G. I little thought that he would come to occupy the position which he afterwards held in connection with the Gaiety and its productions. He was the model for the smart youth of London and his hats and clothes were widely copied. He was the first person, I think, to introduce the fashion of wearing wash-leather gloves and double shirt-cuffs which had a tremendous boom. His catchwords spread everywhere. "Thanks very much and so forth" was introduced into every conversation for months.

The way in which Payne pronounced certain words was, alone, a great asset to him. This added to a slight lisp

got a laugh every time. A typical Teddy Payne aside occurred in "When will justice be done to England?" when he and G. G. appeared as two unemployed workmen. Said Teddy, "You know it's a funny thing. I eat well, I sleep well, I drink well. But if anyone mentions the word 'work' I come all over of a tremble!"

His air of startled surprise when Susan (Violet Lloyd), to whom he was making love in ignorance of the fact that she was really his fiancée whom he believed to be elsewhere, removes her mask, could only have been achieved by him. He asks her to write her name in his autograph book.

SUSAN. So that you may tell your friends that you have made another conquest.

P. (smirking). This girl seems to know me!

S. All little men think they are irresistible.

P. (aside). That sounds like Thuthan. Well (briskly), all the girls are after me since I came here. How do you account for that?

S. Some mistake somewhere. It can't be for your beauty.

P. (with great conviction). This is Thuthan!

S. (removing mask). It is. Here to convince herself that you are not worth troubling about.

One line of his I always remember. The baying of dogs is heard off and someone calls out: "Fly. Here are the bloodhounds." In a quavering voice Teddy asked: "Are bloodhounds those dogs with cheeks like Inverness capes?"

In one of the Gaiety plays Teddy Payne, scrutinising a bottle of some elixir and reading off the label, "Ten drops in a tumblerful of water turns an old man, or an old woman, into a boy of twenty," remarked, with an air of wonderment, "Fancy turning an old woman into a boy of twenty!"

We were not exempt, as undergraduates, from the attention of advertisers of similar wares. I recall an incident which befell a member of my own college at Oxford who now occupies a very prominent legal position. Having received one of these documents, he conceived the idea of enlarging on it and wrote somewhat as follows to the proprietors of the mixture: "Dear Sirs,—Sitting up, burning the midnight oil, with a wet towel round my head and drinking cups of strong coffee at intervals to stimulate my failing energies, I suddenly bethought myself

of your invaluable mixture. I took a dose. Shortly afterwards there was a dull thud and part of my anatomy burst with a sharp report. What do I do now?"

Sixty-two visits to one piece may have been a slight exaggeration. I have no doubt that many did go as many times to some of the Gaiety productions, though I think my record was about thirty, to "The Toreador." Do the youth of to-day patronise their favourite plays to this extent? I doubt it. For one thing, how many modern musical comedies run for two years, which was the normal period of existence for a Gaiety production? My brother and I after a dozen visits or so knew by heart not only the tunes but most of the lyrics, dialogue and incidental music. I believe if we had been given a cue in any part of the piece at random we could have repeated the next line correctly and most of the subsequent dialogue. As I have said, "The Toreador" was always our favourite, but we knew most of "The Messenger Boy," "The Orchid" and "The Spring Chicken." "A waste of time," I have no doubt many will say. We are older now and, I suppose, wiser, but do we have the same fun? Alas, the answer is emphatically "No."

Some of the habitués booked their seats for the run of the piece. One had two stalls permanently. In the first he sat, in the other were deposited his cape, gloves, hat, stick and other impedimenta. Such action usually implied that the patron had a friend 'behind' whom he would escort to one of the customary places for supper, the Savoy, the Cecil or, more usually Romano's. Here the couple would occupy always the same table. Many of the Gaiety girls made good marriages and excellent wives.

A gentleman such as I have described used always to leave his abode with fifty pounds in his pocket. That sum which he had not got rid of by nightfall he would hand to the hansom-cab driver who took him home. Towards the end of the evening's entertainment, as his movements were pretty well known, he would be followed by a string of cabs, each driver hoping that he would be the one selected. Not unnaturally was it with small surprise we learned that he was last heard of as a bar-tender in the Argentine.



## VI

### CLUBS

“Man is by nature a social animal.”

ARISTOTLE.

LIVING in London as I did for many years, I never really felt the need of a club. Then it suddenly dawned on me that it might be a good thing to become a member of one.

I had had no experience of clubs. One of the first I ever joined was at Oxford. I do not know what happens there now, but in my time there was a craze for forming clubs. The members were photographed in straw boaters, and ties of the club colours, smirking inanely in various quadrangles. The club which I helped to form was known as the Cosmopolitan. It was. We had members from all parts of the world. There were Siamese, Indians, Americans, a German, Scots, English, Irish and I think a Canadian. At the first meeting I was appointed Honorary Treasurer. A less suitable appointment could scarcely have been made. I loathe figures or anything to do with finance and had not the vaguest ideas in what the duties of a treasurer consisted. However, flattered at the confidence reposed in my untried capabilities, I unwisely accepted the office. Being called upon to give an account of my stewardship at the end of the term, I announced that the club had a sum of £19, 17s. 3d. in hand. (Loud applause.) I then added that this statement might not deserve the commendation so lavishly bestowed, as the various accounts incurred by the club had not yet been presented. This had the effect, not altogether unexpected on my part at any rate, of considerably damping the enthusiasm displayed by the members, some of whom had been indulging in visions of a sumptuous repast, enhanced by bumpers of whatever beverages the surplus funds permitted. The secretary got up and made some very unpleasant remarks about the capability, or lack of it, dis-

played by the Honorary Treasurer and, so far as I was concerned, the proceedings ended in resignation (mine) and gloom.

A London club, however, presented no difficulties of this sort.

I had acquired a small sum of money, and this I determined to employ in obtaining access to one or other of the imposing portals in the neighbourhood of St. James's Street.

A great friend of mine was a member of Arthur's, and after the usual preliminaries I was delighted to discover that I had not been blackballed. Some are born clubmen; some achieve clubdom; and some, I suppose, have clubdom thrust upon them. I felt that I had qualified in the second category. Arthur's was just the sort of club I had desired. It was not hearty; in fact, for the first ten years of which I was a member I was never addressed by any of the older habitués, slipping in and out with a wary eye on these exclusive veterans, rather like a young stag who gives the older ones a wide berth. As no females were allowed inside the sacred premises, however, this was for a different reason.

A certain pomp was maintained at Arthur's, a pomp which in these days, I am sorry to say, is rapidly vanishing.

To dine without being properly dressed was unthinkable, unless perhaps one was catching the night train for the North. Certain tables in the dining-room were tacitly reserved for caducous elders. It was not with mixed delight that habitués occasionally had the pleasure of witnessing such tables occupied by newcomers unaware of the appalling solecism which they were ignorantly committing.

One such in a friendly mood approached one of these old warriors in the morning-room and in a light-hearted way remarked, "Good morning, Puppy," a designation which he had heard bestowed by an old friend. The member in question, whose total height, in boots, was about five feet four, wheeled on him, purple in the face, his watery blue eyes darting indignant glances, his long, nondescript-coloured moustache bristling with wrath, and his hat, a high-topped, curly-brimmed, bowler made to the owner's design, nearly shaken from his head by suppressed emotion.

"What the devil do you mean, sir," he shouted, "by addressing me as 'Puppy'? 'Puppy,' sir," is a name reserved for my friends. I'll thank you, sir, in future, if there is any necessity to address me, an occasion which I may add I sincerely hope will never arise, to do so by my proper name, which is Colonel ——"

Needless to say, such an exordium completely finished the light-hearted young man.

Certain members used to play bridge, and there was a rather irascible and bad card-player, who, occupied with his favourite game, was seated at a table which was illuminated by tall candles in spring candlesticks. One of these, incompletely fixed, suddenly shot up into the air. The gentleman in question was very deaf, and knew nothing of what had happened till the candle, the spring and the shade descended on his head in succession. This did nothing to soothe his natural irritability.

The advent of another old member filled me with delight. Quite regardless of any convention, he would ascend the steps of the club attired in the loudest of loud checks, make his way to his favourite chair and sit there regardless of everyone, for he was as deaf as a post.

Whether you are in a club, an hotel, a private house, or anywhere else, it seems to me only fair to regard the well-being of your fellow-men. Even in a club I have been wakened in the early hours by inconsiderate members who, regardless of the comfort of their fellow-beings, would come in, slam their doors, possibly without intention, and murder sleep.

There was a member who joined long after I did who used to snore loudly. There was nothing to be done with him, and his disgusting noises I had to endure. I tried banging on his door suddenly in the early hours of the night, and though rewarded by stertorous grunts which heralded for a time a cessation of the disturbance, the dreary business would soon begin all over again. At length I gave it up as a bad job. The secretary said he was powerless.

At first it was quite an ordeal to dine there alone. Small single tables lined the walls. In the centre, but at one end, was a larger one laden with a cold buffet. The cash-desk

stood by the door. At either end there was a fireplace. In the centre, as you dined, the waitresses were drawn up in ranks, four at each end, facing one another. The butler and wine steward stood close to the cash-desk. Your candle, set in a silver scone, was lighted and placed on the table. All the time you were eating your dinner did these rows of waitresses face each other. I always wondered what they were thinking about. Probably what awful bores the members were. Some of them were quite pretty, but I hardly ever dared to look at them. In looks and appearance as time went on they gradually deteriorated, and became harder and harder to obtain. The earlier ones were well trained and first-class waitresses. It is always a debatable point as to whether men or women are best at this sort of thing. Personally I think, generally speaking, that women are preferable though really first-class men are better. The latter are usually noisier and less deft. I have been in clubs where waiters in tail coats, brass buttons, striped waistcoats and medals congregated in corners and, without paying much attention to members and their guests, seemed to spend their time, judging by suppressed smirks, in telling each other what were presumably spicy bits of gossip or dirty stories.

Arthur's was not the type of club which young men for long have wished to join. They require squash courts, swimming pools, bars and a place where they can entertain their lady friends and be certain of getting a bedroom when they want it. Old-fashioned clubs do not provide these facilities, and for such a club to pay, something like 600 members are needed. The First World War dealt those of this type so great a blow that many of them never recovered. The present war will probably finish off the majority.

Arthur's staggered along during the years between 1919 and 1939 with a gradually diminishing membership and but few new candidates coming up for election. The late Frank Curzon made great efforts to save it, and under his able chairmanship it seemed as if its future might be secured. The coming of the present war administered the *coup de grâce*, and finally its doors were closed, to the regret of many, I among them, who had spent so many happy

hours there. My friends were dispersed. The disintegration of the staff was one of the things I regretted most. The majority found places in other clubs, but the focal point was gone, and I said 'goodbye' to them with real sorrow.

The members of Arthur's were for the most part country gentlemen of a type which has done much for our land in the past. They took their duties seriously, and upheld the traditions of country life in a manner which it is to be hoped, in spite of changes and vicissitudes, their successors will be able to imitate. The outlook on life of some may have been narrow, but no one could deny that the majority lived up to their code.

I once took a German to lunch there. It was an unfortunate day, for looking round the dining-room he whispered, "Tell me, do all the members have to be over sixty before they are admitted?"

His parting remark was more encouraging. Said he, "Now I know what English gentlemen are like! That is what we want to be. A nation of 'Herrenvolk.'" It seems likely that a considerable period will elapse before such an ambition is realised.

I am writing these lines (not that this will be of any interest to anyone, but it amuses me to narrate it!) in a small room in a small house in the Highlands, twenty-four miles from the nearest railway. I have just washed up the dinner dishes, a job I do not much enjoy, and am sitting in front of a wood fire the fuel for which I have to provide. This I usually manage by the acquisition of such as can be annexed, without observation, from a neighbouring lumber camp.

Amid these conditions I confess to a hankering after the fleshpots of Arthur's with a longing more than ordinary. I should appreciate to the full the warmth, the quiet dignity, the shaded lights, the unobtrusive waiting, the greetings from one's friends and the staff, who, at any rate, always appeared to be pleased to see me.

The food, I thought, was good. It was plain, and rather more expensive than in some other clubs. Were I to be informed that I was never to have anything better than I had had at Arthur's I should not worry.

Certain members were always complaining. These for

the most part, it seemed to me, were of the type who would complain about everything, and probably lived off bread and cheese in their own surroundings. One Blimp-like person I remember well. He came in and ordered a whisky-and-soda. When it arrived he said aloud in front of the secretary that he thought the whisky had been watered and that it was not fit to drink. In any case, his remark was in the worst possible taste, and having been ticked off by the chairman he disappeared and went elsewhere, for which a good many people were thankful. One member brought his own asparagus, wrapped up in a brown-paper parcel, which he had cooked for him. This, to me seemed rather superfluous.

One pleasant little custom of Arthur's which lingers in my mind was that when cashing a cheque we always received clean new notes.

It must have been, I fancy, about the year 1922 that an automatic lift was installed. Shortly afterwards, one Sunday morning, a trio of adventurous veterans decided to inspect the innovation. Pressing accordingly the button which set the affair in motion, they started on their Odyssey. At the outset all went according to plan. Suddenly, for reasons unknown, between two floors they came to a dead stop. It was, as I have said, the Seventh Day. At such times the comings and goings, part of normal club life, are to a great extent stilled. The preliminary outburst of the trio, designed with a view to procuring outside assistance, swelled by degrees to baffled bellows only comparable to those of a wounded buffalo. Gradually their volume dwindled, and finally, save for an occasional muffled groan, died away. I forget the period of their incarceration, but when rescued they were nearly asphyxiated as there was no ventilation. "Serve 'em damned well right," growled one old diehard (he of the loud checks) as the news spread, "for shoving in such newfangled contraptions."

Arthur's owed its designation to one Robert Arthur who for some years owned White's. He was the son of that John Arthur who had been assistant to Francis White, the original proprietor of White's Chocolate House. "When Francis White died in 1711," wrote Brigadier General C. G.

Higgins, in the series of articles which appeared in the "Field" on "Great Social Clubs," "his wife Elizabeth assumed the management and retained it until about 1730, when she handed it over to John Arthur. According to the rate book, John Arthur appears from the year 1702 to have been the occupant of 69 St. James's Street, so it would seem that Francis White must have sub-let the premises to him from that date, possibly without vesting him with the management of the Chocolate House. John Arthur died in 1734, and was succeeded by his son Robert, who is shown in the rate book as the occupier of 69 St. James's Street from 1734 to 1756. Various books of reference have stated that Arthur's Club was founded in 1765, that was the year after Robert Arthur's death, but so far as the managers of the club were aware, no mention of Arthur's can be found from the time of Robert Arthur's death until the year 1811—and this year therefore must be accepted as the date of the Club's foundation. This was nearly 50 years after Arthur had died, none of the original members of Arthur's Club, founded in 1811, could have known him, and it would, therefore, seem that the only reason the Club was named after him was owing to the fact that he had once rented the house they proposed to take for their club house."

There had been a club on this same site since the date when White's moved from here. It was then known as Miles Club, being run by two men named Miles and Evans, and was one of the fashionable rendezvous for card-playing. It was closed in 1809.

The original subscription for Arthur's was 15 guineas, any candidate proposed by a member of the committee being eligible without a seconder.

It is amusing to speculate on the relations existing between members of the original committee when we read that, one blackball excluding, only four out of the original fifty candidates proposed were elected! Two blackballs were subsequently substituted. In June 1811, the first meeting having been held at 16 St. James's Street, the present site of Lloyds Bank, the membership was raised to 350 and the subscription to 20 guineas. By 1828 there were 600 members.

Both Mr. Arthur Oswald and General Higgins (the former in an article dealing with Arthur's in "Country Life"), to whom I am indebted for information, mention Captain Gronow's notes on gambling in London clubs. In these it is stated that (though the members of Arthur's, it is true, had never quite such a notorious reputation as gamblers as had those of White's and Brooks's) in 1836 "a nobleman of the highest reputation and influence in Society was detected at Arthur's (Gronow says actually it was at Graham's, another club) cheating at cards, and after a trial which did not go in his favour, died of a broken heart."

It is interesting to note the prices of wines in those days. Sherry was 6s. a bottle; Madeira 9s.; Port 5s.; Claret 10s.; Champagne 14s.; and Vin de Graves 10s.

"The clubhouse," writes Mr. Oswald, "is among the most interesting and least altered of those which arose in such numbers during the early years of the nineteenth century—that golden age of the London club. Arthur's dignified façade is one of those which still impart a classic flavour to St. James's Street even after all that the changes of recent years have done to impair its architectural character."

The main staircase, dividing into two, was one of the main features of the interior, surmounted by a cupola-shaped and domed window. The ceilings were fine and the rooms lofty and well proportioned. All the doors were made of fine mahogany which lent an air of dignified luxury. Indeed, "a general aspect of calm and dignity pervades the whole house."

The club owned some very fine silver marked with its name and also the address.

No mention of Arthur's would be complete without an allusion to Kitty Fischer or Fisher, an engraving of whom, after the picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds, who painted her seven times, used to hang in the hall. On my only visit to London since the disappearance of Arthur's I was delighted to find that this picture, purchased by the Duke of Devonshire, is now hanging in the committee-room of Pratt's.

This beautiful girl, "the essence of small talk and the



magazine of contemporary anecdote," as she is described by a writer in the "Town and Country Magazine," was the daughter of a German staymaker. That she was a lady of extravagant tastes we may gather from the fact that she managed to get through no less a sum than £12,000 in nine months, which was pretty good going! She was then, aged twenty, living under the protection of Captain Keppel, Lord Ligonier being another of her admirers, of whom she had many. Arthur's had a particular interest in this frail and charming creature, for she was for some time kept by subscription of the whole club. She had been introduced to fashionable society by a Mr. George Martin, who was known, owing to his handsome appearance, as 'The Military Cupid.' Lack of means rendered their separation inevitable and "her companionship was eagerly sought by many men of wealth and fashion." She was a good rider, and the possessor of a biting wit. Reynolds often painted her, as I have mentioned, a Mr. Crewe paying him fifty guineas on one of these occasions. The artist's best known portrait of her is that representing her as Cleopatra about to dissolve a large pearl earring in a goblet held in her left hand. Lord Crewe and Lord Lansdowne each had portraits of Kitty Fischer by Sir Joshua in their collections.

Self-appointed moral critics found her a useful target, and at one time, previous to her marriage, she issued a public appeal in the "Political Advertiser" (March 30th, 1759) "to the humane and generous heart" asking for protection against "mean, ignorant and venal" wretches who threatened to publish memoirs of her, and stating that the latter had not the slightest foundation in truth. She married in December 1766 a Mr. Norris, the son of the Member for Rye, who was said to have had an "extraordinary attachment for the sex, particularly those of no character."

Her married life only lasted three short months, but she was said to have been an excellent wife "and at once set about reforming her husband and retrieving his fortunes." She died "a victim of cosmetics" on March 10th, 1767, her final request being that she might be buried in her best ball-dress.



## KITTY FISCHER.

*By Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

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THIS FAMOUS LADY WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A GERMAN STAY-MAKER, AND MARRIED IN 1766 MR. NORRIS, SON OF THE MEMBER FOR RYE. AS WITTY AS SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL SHE WAS A FAVOURITE SUBJECT OF SIR JOSHUA'S BRUSH, AND THIS ENGRAVING IS PROBABLY TAKEN FROM THE EARLIEST OF HIS SEVEN KNOWN PORTRAITS OF HER. A WRITER IN THE "TOWN & COUNTRY MAGAZINE" EXTOLS HER AS "THE ESSENCE OF SMALL TALK AND THE MAGAZINE OF CONTEMPORARY ANECDOTE", ADDING THE INTERESTING NOTE THAT SHE WAS FOR SOME TIME "KEPT BY SUBSCRIPTION OF THE WHOLE CLUB AT ARTHUR'S".

SHE DIED BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1771, "A VICTIM TO COSMETICS".



When Arthur's was closed, members were given opportunities of joining several other London clubs.

I went to the Carlton. The first occasion on which I visited it as a member was early in September 1940. A week later it was badly bombed. There are said to have been 40 members of Parliament dining in one room when the bombs fell. None was killed!

Curiously enough, the Carlton, after being bombed, moved to Arthur's, which, at the date of writing, they still occupy.

Another club, though of an entirely different character, for which my dear old friend Colonel Hugh Ross proposed me is Pratt's. I nearly always used to dine here when I was in London prior to 1939, more for the sake of the company than for any other reason, though one could order excellent grills or fried fish, but nothing elaborate. The members dine at one table and conversation is general. It is always varied and generally interesting. Some of the happiest evenings of my life have been spent here. If the amusing stories connected with the club were set down they would fill a large volume.

Pratt's was started by the then Duke of Beaufort one hundred years ago, and was subsequently owned by the late Lord Ormathwaite, who sold it to the Duke of Devonshire. I was very proud a few years ago to be asked to serve on the committee.

'Willie,' as Lord Ormathwaite was known to the members, was the friend of all, and with supreme tact guided the conversation at the club dinners over which he used to preside almost every night. With his soft voice, wonderful memory, and imperturbable courtesy he filled the role of host in a manner which would have been impossible for anyone less gifted. Nothing appeared to worry him. He had wide knowledge of men and affairs, and his absence leaves a blank which is sorely missed.

Clubs of quite a different character to either Arthur's or Pratt's are the Shikar Club and 'Our Society.' Of the former I have been a member since its inception in 1906; of the latter, more recently. The Shikar Club was founded by Lord Elphinstone, the late P. B. Vanderbyl and Captain (as he then was) C. E. Radcliffe:

"To develop the social side of sport.

"To bring together camp-fire comrades—the old-time hunter and the young aspirant, the Empire-maker (whether soldier or civilian) and the humble globe-trotter who carries a gun—in a word, to cement friendship and to revive memories of golden days.

"To maintain the standard of sportsmanship—it is not squandered bullets and swollen bags which appeal to us; the test lies rather in a love of forest, mountain and desert; in acquired knowledge of the habits of animals; in the strenuous pursuit of a wary and dangerous quarry; in the instinct of a well-devised approach to a fair shooting distance, and in the patient retrieve of a wounded animal.

"These and such as these are the ideal of the members of the Shikar Club."

His late Majesty King George V, and after his death His Majesty King George VI, granted their Patronage to the club, and for many years H.R.H. the late Duke of Connaught was President. When increasing age compelled him to relinquish this post, the Earl of Athlone graciously consented to act in this capacity. Since its inception the late Earl of Lonsdale had been Chairman.

After the death of F. C. Selous, the last of the great big-game hunters, I was asked to fill his place on the committee, an invitation which I felt honoured to accept.

On the retirement of Major C. E. Radcliffe from the position of Hon. Secretary I was invited to carry on his duties. I have endeavoured to do so since 1933.

We meet once a year, and those places in the world which have not been visited by one or more of the members can be very few. It is to be hoped that the club will resume its usual meetings after the war.

In these days one is apt to dwell on the glories of the past. I remember the best whisky-and-soda I ever had, which was in the private car of Major Philip Egerton at Singa just before starting out with Geoffrey Courtney (now colonel of a Battalion of the London Scottish) for a trip up the Dinder. It was very hot and there was ice. (My host on this occasion subsequently achieved fame by catching

in Loch Stack in August 1943 the record sea-trout, a monster which turned the scales at 18½ lbs.)

As an adjunct to this I recollect the largest cigar I ever smoked. It was the hospitable practice of the chairman of the Shikar Club to invite the members of the committee to lunch with him, after the annual committee meeting, at his house in Carlton House Terrace. After a magnificent lunch a footman appeared with a flat tray containing various compartments in which were cigars. One of these contained some of a length which had to be seen to be believed. Everyone took a cigar and then they came to me. "Never," thought I, "shall I have another opportunity of a cigar like this," so, braving convention, I boldly seized one of these enormous smokes, endeavouring to look as if I was accustomed to luxuriating thus every day. I was still smoking it at 4.15!

Lord Lonsdale's activities in connection with sport were so numerous and varied that they would fill a large volume. He was, perhaps, best known to the public from his association with the Royal Horse Show and the old National Sporting Club. Mr. Trevor Wignall writes: "Lord Lonsdale, when he was in attendance, was the ruler of all he surveyed. A mild-mannered and mild-voiced noble when he conversed, he was a harsh martinet when anybody had the audacity to sneeze or cough, or indulge in whispers during the rounds. I have seen him spring out of his chair and publicly upbraid a spectator for breaking the sepulchral calm by asking his companion for a match. It was Lord Lonsdale who made unbreakable the regulation, which was not in the books, that there should be no talking except between the rounds. . . . He was a defender of professional pugilism, and a fighter for what he considered were its rights, for the greater part of his life."

He was never anything but kind and helpful to me during our association, and I look back on it with feelings of gratitude. Nothing was ever too much trouble, and his knowledge of the world and humanity was unsurpassed. No one had a greater sympathy and warmth of heart for his fellow-men; no one permitted himself a greater latitude in performing acts of kindness, unknown for the most part save to those who benefited.

In 1939 I felt honoured when the Boone and Crockett Club of America invited me to become an Associate Member. Founded in 1887, it consists of 100 regular members and of such Associate and Honorary members as may be elected by the Board of Directors.

Its objects are:

1. To promote manly sport with the rifle.
2. To promote travel and exploration in wild and unknown, or but partially known, lands.
3. To work for the preservation of the wild animal life of this country, especially big game, and so far as possible, to further legislation for that purpose, to assist in enforcing the existing laws, and to educate the American public in the importance of proper game preservation.
4. To promote enquiry into, and to record observation on, the habits and natural history of the various wild animals.
5. To encourage making the results of sport available for scientific study in Museums.
6. To bring about among the members the interchange of opinions and ideas on hunting, travel and exploration, on the various kinds of hunting-rifles and on the haunts and habits of game animals.

Its objects, in fact, are very similar to those of our own Shikar Club.

The Boone and Crockett Club has several memorable publications to its credit made up of articles written by members of the club and including such well-known names as Theodore Roosevelt, George Bird Grinnell and Owen Wister. In the obituary notice of the latter it states: "A great American and one of the oldest living members of the Boone and Crockett Club, Owen Wister, died July 20, 1938, at the age of seventy-eight." To countless thousands of English-speaking readers he brought the true spirit of the West in the greatest novel ever written on that part of America in his best known work "The Virginian." It also endeared its author to many lovers of adventure, whatever their nationality, who share with his countrymen the loss of this fine spirit.

'Our Society,' better known as the Crimes Club, was founded by the late Arthur Lambton, who died in 1938. He was succeeded as President by Sir Percy Everett. Under his direction the dinners held have maintained the same excellence of interest as in the past, and this largely is due to him. I am, I hope, betraying no secrets when I say that the discussions on the case of the Cambridge undergraduate, of Dr. Ruxton, and others were kept at the same high level as any previously entered upon.

Arthur Lambton mentions the Society in several of his books and describes its inception, which was due to Mr. Ingelby Oddie, for many years coroner for Westminster. He, during a walk with Lambton in Rome, discovered that they were both deeply interested in crime, and suggested that a small coterie of crime experts should be formed, "and so," writes Lambton, "a casual conversation led to what people to-day kindly call the most interesting dining club in London." It was not until ten years later, in December 1903, that the founder gave the inaugural lunch at the Carlton. The following year the club was in full swing. There were six original members: Professor J. Churton Collins, H. B. Irving, J. B. Atlay and Ingelby Oddie among them. Later more were added, including Sir A. Conan Doyle, Max Pemberton, Sir Ernest Wild, K.C., and many others distinguished in various walks of life. The Society meets at intervals, the proceedings being strictly private, but I am not revealing any by this brief mention. I have always taken a great interest in crime and am very proud of the fact that I was considered worthy of being included in so distinguished a gathering. In 1904 the subject was not of such widespread interest as now. Edgar Allan Poe was one of the first to popularise the crime story with "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Nowadays every second volume on a bookstall deals with crime. It is rather remarkable that in this form of authorship women should have attained such eminence. There are few male authors who can vie in this particular field with Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Ngaio Marsh and Tennyson Jesse, though the two best stories of this description are, in my opinion, "Before the Fact" and "Malice Aforethought" by Francis Iles, whose identity, for long a



mystery, has now been revealed as a pseudonym of Anthony Berkeley.

There is another club to which I and others occupied with war jobs owe a great debt, and that is the Highland Club in Inverness. It provided excellent meals at a reasonable price throughout the war; the company we found there saved many of us from acute boredom and lethargy; and it was possible within its hospitable portals to obtain a whisky-and-soda or a pink gin—that is, unless the Royal Air Force or the Royal Navy had been holding a gala day. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking its secretary, Captain Leckie, and his admirable and willing staff, which, changed as it was from time to time as more women were called up, never seemed to deteriorate as did those of other establishments, for their courtesy and good-humour which never failed. Here came Admirals and Generals, Air Marshals and Commodores, Captains, Colonels, Majors and those of ranks less exalted. They sank and rose with unexpected suddenness and, to an uninitiated civilian like myself, at times with but little apparent reason. Many were known by initials which threw over them an air of mystery one felt it was tactless to explore.

Here too, if one was lucky, except when the M.C.C. (and I do not refer to the cricket club) took possession, it was possible even to obtain a comfortable bedroom, a boon beyond price, for such were practically unobtainable. When journeying throughout the Highlands as my work compelled me to do, it was impossible to forecast whether accommodation would be available. On arrival, tired and weary, at one's destination it would be to find only too often that the hotel whose prospect had appeared so inviting was either commandeered by the military or fully occupied.

From my own experiences I should have said that every single one from the Forth to the forbidden zones was inhabited by a horde of migrant and peripatetic females who, usually in pairs or some sort of family party, took up residence in some fairly remote locality and remained put until compulsorily moved on. They flitted from place to place, never a day's march nearer home, but on the con-

trary full of determination to keep going while the going was good. They were all markedly similar in general characteristics and apparently made to the same pattern. Having settled themselves down, after a preliminary scout round to get the lie of the land, they resorted to incredible artifices to get possession of the best chair, near the fire and with a good light. The unfortunate interloper, should he have the temerity to upset the customary routine by disregarding the unwritten rules of the game and competing with the regular combatants, came in for some very old-fashioned looks. In a particular hotel an old woman who with the eye of a veteran detected immediately that there was only one chair in the whole lounge, capable of seating about fifty people, which was comfortable, close to the fire and with a window behind, after a short strategical pause annexed it and remained in undisputed possession for two years. Not another soul occupied it even for a brief interval, so far as I am aware, during that period. She had daughters, and except during meal-times one was always left on guard. Before leaving for a meal a kind of zareba was erected with the aid of a sofa and chairs, which was festooned with all sorts of family possessions excepting the washing, coats, hats, books, knitting—just to let you know. No one ever had the nerve to move any of their impedimenta. I always suspected they concealed some sort of a bomb, timed to go off at a certain hour if one of the family was not in possession. This sort of behaviour seems extraordinarily selfish, and I was delighted for the sake of friends of mine in the hotel when an order came out that such incubus could only remain for four nights.

From these disastrous encounters the club was a city of refuge, and without its sanctuary I should have fared ill.

As I have mentioned, its members remained far from static. A few were more or less permanent. These included Lochiel, who seemed to spend his life presiding over committees, making speeches at public functions, which he did extraordinarily well, attending meetings all over Scotland, and generally helping every cause. Colonel Hon. Ian Campbell, the District Commissioner, appeared unobtrusively at intervals, but always seemed to be where

he was wanted. The R.N.O., Captain Briggs, preserved his glass of milk at lunch and his imperturbable demeanour throughout all disturbances. I enjoyed many evenings with him, talking particularly of those old days when Britannia really ruled the waves and those into whose charge they were entrusted possessed such striking and dominating characteristics. Only once did I see him at all ruffled. "Has anyone seen my ship?" he asked one day after lunch. As his living quarters were at an hotel I was, for the moment at a loss.

"My ship's coming by road," he went on. "I wish I could find out where she is."

It transpired that the vessel in question was being transported from somewhere farthest south, by lorry. Now I had that morning noticed that one end of a narrow street debouching on a main thoroughfare was completely blocked by the passage of what appeared to be a sort of miniature "Queen Mary." In my innocence I had imagined that this was another stunt on the part of those responsible for popularising 'Submarine Week' or 'Comforts for the Merchant Navy.' On reflection, however, I decided that I must be wrong, and was able to relieve Briggs's anxiety by telling him that without doubt I had seen his ship. So indeed it turned out. She was successfully launched with the aid of a crane, whilst fortunately a bottle of champagne was not considered necessary at the ceremony.

Another habitué was Captain R. E. Sawyer, the Divisional Food Officer, who performed a difficult job in a manner sufficiently striking to earn encomiums from Lord Woolton. He is in addition an ardent film fan, a taste we share and obtain a good deal of relaxation from discussing, has great knowledge of trout as well as being the acknowledged expert on the Black Slug (*Tovus slythicus*), on which he has written a valuable memorandum, surprisingly documented. Our work was closely connected, we got a good deal of fun out of it and were always in complete harmony. He married Osgood Mackenzie's daughter, and at their delightful house at Inverewe they possess a garden which is the admiration of botanical experts and a source of envy to less gifted mortals. Osgood Mackenzie's book, "A

Hundred Years in the Highlands," is a mine of information to all those who love the old traditions and ways of life.

At times officers whose duties brought them North were made honorary members, and very pleasant were such additions to our numbers in the majority of cases. One in particular I recollect who, recalled to the Navy, was given a shore job. Never previously having enjoyed the delights of fishing, he devoted such spare time as he had to this diversion with an enthusiasm which evoked the admiration of veterans who never wearied of proffering advice and suggestions. These he swallowed with the avidity of his prospective victims. The latter, I fancy, never attained numbers that were remarkable, but the impedimenta he collected for encompassing their downfall were as varied and comprehensive as were the suggestions with which he was inundated. It seemed to me that the sporting emporia in the town failed in their duty when, on his appointment terminating, they did not present him with a testimonial which would have served the double purpose of testifying to his enthusiasm and the excess profits from which the donors undoubtedly had to part. He left just after he had succumbed to a craze for stalking, a knowledge of which he was about to add to other accomplishments, in which case the gunmakers could scarcely have remained unrepresented on a body such as should have been established.

A later addition to the circle which usually assembled before the dinner hour was Captain J. I. Hallett, R.N. To set down here his distinguished war record would be superfluous. Those, however, who met him in the North will recall with gratitude his sense of humour. This was equalled only by his skill as a raconteur and the address with which he invariably selected one appropriate to the occasion from a collection of stories whose equal I have seldom encountered.

Others whom we missed when removed by Fate were Air Commodore Dunn and Air Vice-Marshal Malcolm Henderson, who happily returned later. The former looked a typical sailor, which in fact he had been, and might have sat for a portrait of John Bull. The latter carried with him an atmosphere of quiet efficiency and

## VII

### *SOME REFLECTIONS OF A CINEMA FAN*

"Study me how to please the eye, indeed."

"Love's Labour's Lost," Act 1, Scene 1.

**I**T was, I think, in the summer of 1923 that I went to the wedding of a friend in the country. Coming back to the house across the lawn, after the service, the guests were photographed with a cine-camera. Now, of course, they are common, but in those days something of a novelty. One of the guests was actually a 'movie' actress. She was petite, pretty and attractive, but with a certain diamond-like hardness, which may have been due to the life of the films. It probably was. I learned afterwards that in her little old home-town in England, which I happened to know well, she had in her youth been known as the 'Postage-stamp.' I was introduced to her and we had what was to me at any rate an interesting talk. She invited me to meet her husband, who produced films. I will call him Dillon. He was an Americanised Australian, and a more remarkable creature I have seldom encountered. He was tough too, mighty tough, but through his coriaceousness there ran an extraordinary streak of lush sentimentality. I remember after I had got to know him, that he one day turned to me and, his eyes moist, said, "When I've faded away into the blue, don't think too hardly of me!"

Poor old D. One couldn't help having a soft corner for him, though he certainly did his best to harden it at times. After our first meeting I encountered him pretty frequently. He was going to produce a film in this country and, knowing my interest, he one day asked me if I would come with him and, at a small salary as assistant director, pick up what I could in the way of film knowledge. I thought that there might be a chance of making some money and agreed. Some experience I gained but very little money. Charles was secretary of the small private company which





had been formed to produce the film, and he and his wife considerably lightened the burdens of the next few months. They both were, and are (for I am happy to say that I still retain their friendship and that of their now grown-up sons) among my dearest friends.

D. had not the slightest idea of time, and Charles would appear, ostentatiously handling his watch, when he thought the former should be getting busy. D. would look at him furtively over his glasses and mutter to me behind his hand, "Say, kan't you get rid of that guy? He makes me nervous!"

Short, thick-set, with a round face, a wet, pouting lower lip and clear brown eyes, D. with his tortoise-shell rimmed spectacles, which were not so common then as now, looked the typical American. After Charles had repeated his watch trick at ten-minute intervals for an hour or so, D. would emerge, looking very intense, from what he called his office. He had probably been doing nothing more than play with a large and expensive consignment of salmon flies which he had purchased in anticipation of his next week's salary. His chances of salmon-fishing existed solely in his own imagination. Having safely emerged, he would suddenly sit down, sink his head in his hands with every appearance of extreme exhaustion and, beckoning to me, gasp out faintly, "Gimme some ars-prin!"

The post of assistant director I discovered to consist in being handy-man for everyone, particularly D. The provision of aspirin appeared to be one of my duties, and I kept a supply regularly in stock. D. would gasp out "Five!" I was a little staggered at first.

"Five?" I would ask.

"Sure, five. Here, gimme the bottle." He would then tip out what to me looked like about half the contents into his fat little fist, rapidly discharge the tablets in quick succession down his throat, gulp half a glass of water and stretch himself full length on a couch.

The infuriated Charles, knowing that he had been baffled in the expectation of getting any work done for at least another couple of hours, would retire glaring balefully at the recumbent figure and calling loudly on his Maker. Meanwhile the entire cast would be kept hanging



about doing nothing, the overhead charges would mount, everyone would lose their tempers, and D., surfeited with 'arsprins' and blissfully unconscious, would slumber like a babe.

One of the things which struck me most during my brief incursion into the film world was the extraordinary lack of businesslike method and the wasteful and unnecessary delays which it seemed impossible to overcome. (All this happened twenty years ago.)

Having shot some of the indoor scenes, D. decided that he would like some fresh air, and announced that we were to go on location.

The story, a smuggling one, and not a very good one at that, required wild, rocky scenery and beating surges, so we all embarked for Cornwall. The majority of the company travelled by train, D. decided to go by car and, for some extraordinary reason which I never fathomed, to start at night, taking me with him. I like motoring so long as it is done in comparative comfort, but to go hurtling through the darkness in a large closed hireling with D. asleep in the corner did not amuse me. After one or two minor mishaps (my nice leather suitcase was shot violently into the darkness from where it had been strapped on top of the car and bears the marks to this day), we arrived at our destination in the early hours of the morning. I thankfully snatched a few hours' sleep.

D.'s orders were that we were to be in attendance at 10.30 a.m. to prospect sites. Not feeling too hopeful, at 10.30 I was ready, with various members of the cast. At 12.30 p.m. D. appeared and said it was a good time for lunch. We had lunch—having got over the shock of D.'s appearance. A suitable costume for prospecting sites, it seemed, in his opinion, consisted of a pair of white polo breeches, very smart and highly polished brown leather riding-boots, a soft shirt with a red tie, the whole surmounted by, of all things, a fez! Thus attired, chewing a cigar and with an air of preternatural thoughtfulness, he perambulated the cliffs. He was not in the least thoughtful really, I knew that well enough. He was enjoying the sensation his outlandish garb was exciting in the breasts of the local inhabitants. They, he was quite certain, had

never in their simple lives seen anything quite so striking as the figure cut by D., the famous producer. He was right. Their lower jaws must have acquired a permanent droop.

D. and his wife, who played the part of the simple heroine, were installed in the best room of the hotel. Their private differences were not always successfully concealed, even in public. In private they sometimes let themselves go. I forget the occasion, but I once had to give him a note which had arrived unexpectedly after lunch. This was the sacred hour devoted by the great man to rest after his morning's labours. I approached the door at the end of the passage which was my goal, when I became aware of certain noises. Not to put too fine a point on it one would have imagined that a miniature bull-fight was taking place. At my hesitating tap there was dead silence. I had taken advantage of a slight lull. The door opened and D. appeared. To my surprise he appeared perfectly calm, though there was a gleam in his eye. He read the note, nodded to me, said "O.K." and shut the door. As I turned away I heard something that sounded like "You big stiff!" and the bull-fight broke out with renewed vigour. I never knew what it was all about.

D.'s wife would appear, cool, self-possessed, smiling, and seat herself, a consciously attractive figure, in the lounge for tea. This she would dispense to the more favoured members of the company with gracious condescension. D. arriving later would smile his appreciation of the charming scene. Approaching the hostess, he would gaze at her with an air of doglike devotion, suddenly push his hand up the back of her head, ruffling all her carefully arranged hair, and exclaim, "Gee! baby, you make me feel kinda good!", or some equally appropriate endearment. This sort of thing always infuriated the object of his devotion to the verge of frenzy. One could hardly be surprised. She would reply with a vicious snub and D. would retire hurt.

The recipient of married confidences is not in an enviable position. He is certain to be in the wrong whatever happens. D. and his wife had both been married before, several times by all accounts. He, I think, was genuinely

fond of her, but he must have been a trying person with whom to live. After one snubbing, with an air of pathetic bewilderment which was almost ludicrous he said, "My! Women are funny! You never know what they'll do!" He had just gone down on his knees and kissed her in the middle of the dining-room, or something equally shattering to a woman.

Sometimes I received the confidences of the lady. She, I was assured, had been perfectly happy in her married life until D. had appeared and "taken her away!" So far as I could make out from these stories, the redoubtable D., entirely against the wishes of the household over which she presided (though I was never able satisfactorily to identify the form of the erstwhile husband amongst the wraithlike forms who flitted through the saga), had taken up his quarters in her abode and resolutely refused to budge for anyone. So she had to marry him!

When I noticed things hotting up for a bull-fight I used to try and sneak away unobserved. After I had got to know them both fairly well, they would both turn on me.

"Don't you go," she would cry. "I want you to hear the sort of things he says to a lady."

"Lady!" D. would snort. "Aw, don't kid yourself."

"Don't you speak to me like that in front of people."

"I'll speak in front of anyone," D. would stoutly affirm. "Besides, I've made love to lots of sweller women than you!", though how this bold statement materially benefited the present dispute I ran no risk of discovering. When they were both well under way I sometimes managed to escape.

The film was, at any rate, neutral ground, for, whatever she might be feeling, the heroine always did what she was told by the director. It was in their private relationship that they were both a bit trying.

One of the outdoor shots was of a fight between excise-men, soldiers and the smugglers' gang. This took a good deal of preparation and rehearsal. At last the day dawned when the scene was actually to be shot. Fortunately it was a fine morning. Enterprising charabanc proprietors ran excursions from neighbouring towns to see the fun. The space to be occupied by the rival bands was cleared.

The excisemen and soldiers were drawn up behind the camera. The smugglers awaited the order to advance, and finally, with excitement at fever heat, D. gave the signal. The smugglers appeared from their hiding-place below the cliffs; the pack ponies swung into view; the military were straining at the leash—when a small dog suddenly took it into its head to advance into the very centre of the picture. Finding itself the object of universal attention, it sat down directly in front of the camera and leisurely proceeded to scratch itself. •

“Cut!” roared D. The dog hurriedly disappeared, the crowd applauded, the actors retired to their positions. Almost at once the sky clouded over, a thin rain began to fall, and Charles on the back of a dirty envelope feverishly started to work out the total loss incurred in film wastage and loss of time. It was days before weather conditions permitted the scene to be shot again.

Eventually it was, and the remaining exterior scenes, one of which consisted of a one-legged man diving from the top of the cliffs into the sea and a fight on the edge of the rocks between a smuggler and some of the soldiers, in which the former, defeated, disappeared over the edge and was caught in a net, were completed. Then we packed up and returned to London for the final interior scenes.

There were four brothers in the cast, the fifth of whom had made their name famous in tough he-man parts. They were all over six feet in height, the sons, I believe of a dignitary in the Church. One of them took the part of the chief smuggler and certainly ‘ran away’ with the picture. He was a fine-looking and very likeable fellow. I often wonder what has become of him.

When we got back to London and were taking some of the interior scenes an actor in one of the minor parts created a disturbance when some foreign royalties visited the studio. I forget their identity, but at first they were unaware that the incident was not part of the story. This man, who had come down in the world, had at one time been a director himself. He had taken a dislike to D. and in the middle of a shot suddenly jumped up and began haranguing the latter. He was hustled off

the set (Charles produced his envelope!) and did not reappear.

It is curious, looking back, to note how completely I fail to recall the story. I remember certain scenes quite clearly, and individuals; the plot and sequence are a complete blank. I suppose this is due to the fact that in the making of a film there is no sort of continuity. Outdoor shots, so far as similar external conditions are necessary, are taken one after the other and have no relation to the progression of the plot as a whole. Interiors are shot in sets. There may be scenes in the early part of the story which do not reappear until the end, with many others intervening. Naturally all the shots of one scene are taken while the particular set is built up, quite regardless of the context. This, I imagine, is the reason for my defective memory. I did eventually see the film as a whole, but it has left no impression on me.

After it was finished D. asked me to go with him to Stoll's, for which firm he was producing another film. The leading part was played by an actor who I thought would make a name for himself, but the last time I saw him was in the part of a minor member of the Gestapo, a role he seems fated to continue, having subsequently filled such in many other films.

One afternoon at Stoll's we were honoured by a visit from no less a celebrity than Master Jackie Coogan, who was then famous throughout the world owing to his performance with Charlie Chaplin in "The Kid." He arrived in a sailor suit, accompanied by his father. The latter struck me as supremely capable of taking care of himself, in which I was wrong, as I believe he was killed in a motor smash in America. The party were received as if they were royalty.

Talking of royalty reminds me of the little Jewish manager who escorted the Coogan party round the studios. On another occasion he was doing the honours to a member of the Greek reigning house. He explained the different technical points to the distinguished visitor, when, seeing a rather blank look on the face of the latter, he remarked brightly, "But I suppose, sir, this is all Greek to you!"

D.'s methods, though he was quite a good director,

savoured at times of the drastic. In one scene a child had to be shown dissolved in tears. The child was produced and D. set to work. The interior set in which the film was being taken was on a stage some twenty feet above ground-level. After an hour or so of bullying and coaxing the infant prodigy still maintained its air of smug composure. D., a kind-hearted creature in reality, was fairly gruelled by the problem. "Say," he burst out at the mother, who stood regarding the infant with a fond smile, "can't you make that child do what I want?"

"Why, Mr. Dillon," she answered, "Sally usually does anything that's wanted. She cries or laughs, sings or dances just as required. She seems sort of quiet to-day, perhaps she's not very well. Are you all right, Sally dear?"

"I'm O.K." replied Sally shortly.

As she had eaten the best part of a pound of chocolates in about twenty minutes, part of D.'s coaxing system, it seemed not unlikely that this might in part be responsible for the fact that she was not quite the little Shirley Temple her mother seemed to imagine. Anyway, her range of emotional capabilities seemed to be confined to a horrid, blank, bovine stare.

D. scratched his head, absolutely at a loss. Her mother, meanwhile, had moved to the edge of the set and stood looking down on to the floor below. Everything was prepared, the stage set, the camera man straining at the leash, the lights ready to be switched on directly D. gave the word. This was, of course, in the days of silent films. Suddenly D. was struck by an inspiration. With one bound he was at the mother's side. Seizing her in a firm grip he partly suspended her over the edge of the staging.

"If you won't cry," he shouted, "I'll throw your mother on to the floor."

Over Sally's face flickered a trace of animation. The chocolates nearly won but not quite.

"Quick," yelled D., "or over goes mother."

The features were definitely stirred. Sally's mouth opened; her figure shook; her horrid little eyes closed, two wet blobs appeared on her cheeks and from the round orifice between came a loud boo-hoo. Sally was crying.

"Camera" shrieked D.

One of the things I hated most in my job was interviewing 'extras.' These would throng the doors of the studio in the morning trying to get taken on in crowd scenes at a guinea a day. Many of the men had been officers in the First World War, and their clothes and general attitude were heart-breaking. Some looked tragic with no disguise; others assumed an air of jauntiness which could deceive no one. In some scenes they had to provide their own clothes, and the shifts to which they went to appear convincing as 'club men' or dashing young blades were pathetic. In one club scene a member's cuffs fell off as he lounged in a chair. In another the dicky of his friend shot forward with a loud plop. It would have been funny if it had not been so heart-rending.

All this, of course, was before the speaking film, which revolutionised the whole industry, had been thought of. Many people at the time disliked the idea of talking films. They thought that the sense of illusion would be destroyed. At times no doubt it is. When the aide-de-camp of the Duke of Wellington on the field of Waterloo suddenly addresses him with a strong American accent it is difficult to stifle one's belief that in 1815 this would scarcely have happened. Illusion goes. Distinguished critics publicly proclaimed their belief that such "an abominable form of entertainment" would soon be abolished. They stated that half the film-going public and all the intelligent portion of that public did not want to have anything to do with 'talkies.' It may seem strange to think that such opinions were prominent only a dozen or so years ago. Yet how many of us now would welcome a return to the silent film? Very few.

I still think with affection of the old cinema houses, their silent-footed attendants squirting Jockey Club or some equally Elysian odour from Flit-like sprayers. I still think with affection of the almost cathedral-like atmosphere which pervaded them, half empty as they were and with the best seats at two shillings, and of the many happy hours I have spent in their dim recesses before the palatial structures which at present usurp their places had come into existence; but I should not like to return to a world of silent films. I fear they would creak too audibly for me

to be lulled back into that dream-like atmosphere of the past. Alas! we must go forward; we can never, never go back.

"The Jazz Singer," quickly followed by "The Singing Fool," which came to the Plaza in 1929, started the furore and incidentally saved Warner Bros. from extinction. Al Jolson had a good voice and 'went big.' Many stars of the silent films had bad voices, or at any rate voices which reproduced badly, and 'went west.' It is difficult now even to remember their names.

Though these are merely random recollections of a film fan which do not set out to attempt seriously to trace the developments which have influenced the film industry, there are certain films which may be mentioned as establishing landmarks in its history. "Intolerance" and "The Birth of a Nation" are the earliest which come to mind.

The first great producer who saw the possibilities of the screen was, without any doubt, D. W. Griffiths. One never hears his name now. He has had many imitators but no one has surpassed him in big-scale productions. The film, it is not always remembered, was run and brought up by business men from an entirely commercial angle. It has not yet altogether recovered from its early beginnings. Griffiths, in 1917, was the first person to connect art with the screen. "The Birth of a Nation" and "Intolerance," in which four separate stories were interwoven, were really great films, for they were the first of their kind. At the time of their production they were, to use the term applied by one critic, 'terrific.' They are terrific now when we consider that they were produced at a time when the film possessed no history worth recording. In the later "Orphans of the Storm," which featured Lilian and Dorothy Gish, the element of suspense, of which Griffiths knew well the value, was very cleverly employed and heightened by the use of parallel action. The close-up shots of horses' hooves bringing the reprieve, and of the trigger of the guillotine, still linger in my memory.

The first great imaginative film was "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," made by Dr. Wiene in 1919 in Germany, which showed that a film "instead of being realistic, might be a possible reality, both imaginative and creative." Here the wild ideas of a madman were shared by the



audience. In it Conrad Veidt appeared. The settings were unusual, but simple, and great play was made with light and shade. No one who saw it is likely to forget it. Yet it is comparatively unknown.

Mayer, one of its authors, also wrote later "The Last Laugh," in which Jannings appeared. "Metropolis," another German film, produced by Fritz Lang, was remarkable for its architecture and the impression it gave of the deadening gloom of machinery.

Another landmark in films was "A Woman of Paris," directed by Chaplin, in which Adolphe Menjou made his first hit. There may have been others previously, but this was the first film I saw in which subtly suggestive touches played a real and convincing part. Chaplin, however, is the only real genius the screen has produced with the exception of Walt Disney; and possibly he would say that he owed a debt to Felix the Cat!

The potentialities of the screen are almost unlimited. At present these do not seem to have been realised. There are many films produced every year. Some, very few, come near to being great; some are good, and a great many bad. The Russians seem to have grasped the possibilities of the screen; so, up to a point, before the war had French and German producers, though the latter were at times terribly heavy. "Kermesse Héroïque" may be classed as a great film. Françoise Rosay, the possessor of a lovely voice, gave a superb performance. I still remember her gesture as the Spaniards headed by her lover ride out of the town and she watches his departure from the balcony, fingering the pearls he has given her. The wealth of unexpressed emotion which by that gesture she conveyed was unforgettable. I still remember the sight from the window, high up above the square, as the Spaniards assemble in the early dawn at the sound of the bugle and hastily fall in. One forgot that it was merely a film, but seemed to be a spectator, torn by varying emotions, actually witnessing the fact that they were leaving. No film that I have ever seen had so great an air of reality.

I have mentioned Emil Jannings, one of the great character actors of the screen. In the early part of "The Last Command" he played a Czarist General in pre-war

Russia. William Powell, then unknown, was an anarchist, with Evelyn Brent as his sister. The contrast between the jovial General examining these two and the old broken-down extra who has escaped to America after the revolution was wonderful. The most moving part was when Jannings is ordered to turn round to have his uniform inspected after he has, with shaking hands, pinned on the Order presented by the Czar himself, which he takes from a case in his pocket. Powell, as the producer, directing his old enemy, played brilliantly, and it was impossible not to feel stirred when, in the mimic battle which he is commanding, Jannings collapses with a heart attack and, thinking he is once again really fighting, gasps out, "Have we won?" Powell says quietly, "Yes, General. You've won." The film was actually founded on the story of General Pleshkof, who, from being a Russian officer, took work as an extra in the film world and eventually became a riding master in New York.

How many of the hundreds of films you see, if a film fan, remain sufficiently clear in your memory for you to be able to recall them after the lapse of a year or two? Very few. Yet though one may not remember a film in its entirety, there are certain incidents which stick in the mind: Charlie Chaplin when he impales two rolls on forks and makes them dance in "The Gold Rush"; his dance with the globe in "The Great Dictator"; Douglas Fairbanks sliding down the curtain in "Robin Hood"; Eddie Cantor lassoing the Roman aristocrat out of his chariot with a whip; Buster Keaton when he launches the boat he has built, which is too big to emerge from the garage doors, and all that remains when it is finally floated is Buster's straw hat on the surface of the river; the expression on Ginger Rogers' face (dear Ginger Rogers!) as she contemplates breaking the plate-glass window on the lorry, when the driver thinks she is making advances to him.

Many films founded perhaps on a favourite book are so distorted after having been filtered through the mentality of a great film producer that it is impossible, save for the names of the characters portrayed, to detect any resemblance. Often they are ruined by the introduction

of a 'love interest' successfully evaded in the original work. Almost the only film I have ever seen in which the characters might have stepped straight from the pages of the original, apart from a tiresome comic sentry, was the silent version of "The Prisoner of Zenda" directed by Rex Ingram. This great producer, already famous through his production of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," had collected an ideal cast. Lewis Stone at first sight might not have been the perfect Rudolf. At first sight only. Before the end of the film he was Rudolf, the finest hero in any book that I have ever read. Sapt too, Robert Edeson, was perfect. Rupert of Hentzau was played by Ramon Novarro, the first part in which I ever saw him on the screen, and vastly superior to Douglas Fairbanks jun., who took the part in the talking version of Anthony Hope's great story. Flavia—well, Flavia can exist only in our imaginations, for she is the one woman we have all loved. Alice Terry, Rex Ingram's wife, moved through Srelsau and the castle of Zenda and was lovely to look at, but the lady of our dreams no actress could portray. The beautiful Barbara La Marr was Mme de Mauban, and for the rest, Black Michael, Bersonin, Detchard and Fritz von Tarlenheim were just as we had imagined them.

To adapt a film from a book is no easy job, however well it may be done. It is not enough to label a set of characters and show them on the screen amid appropriate and artistic surroundings. The atmosphere of the book must be captured as well. To convince the spectator is a much more difficult task than to influence the reader. The latter has his own mental pictures to which the characters, when he sees them, must conform. The characteristics of each, similar as they may be in general, differ widely with each individual, and unless the appearance of the person portraying the character convinces the spectator, or he has sufficient personality to overcome individual initial prejudice, disappointment will be the result.

The only other adaptation from a book which fulfilled these conditions when I saw it as a film was "The Virginian." It was not a 'talkie,' though sound effects were introduced with great advantage. The name part was taken by Gary Cooper, an ideal choice, and I can still hear

the sound of his boots as he walked down the sidewalk looking for Trampas. The most attractive actor on the screen, he gave an unforgettable performance in "Mr. Deeds Comes to Town."

British film producers do not appear to have mastered the technique of production as have Americans, and seldom produce any new ideas.

We have all seen some pretty bad films, some very bad, many American, and unfortunately the majority English. It would be tedious to enumerate these, but of all such films which linger in my memory, unwanted and unsung, I think the worst was one dealing with the adventures of Bonnie Prince Charlie, in whom I have always taken a more than special interest. The part was played by Ivor Novello, who, to begin with, did not look in the least like Bonnie Prince Charlie. Gladys Cooper was Flora Macdonald. All the usual liberties were taken with historical facts, and a good many by those participating in the film. The casualties after the battle of Culloden, the opposing forces being enacted by members of a Highland regiment and the unemployed of Inverness (both sides really letting themselves go), were high.

Prince Charlie in one disguise wore a bowler hat, or what looked like a bowler hat, and a Yorkshire smock. Kingsburgh's cottage in Skye was a brick building covered with wistaria; and tarmac roads and telephone poles, unless my recollection fails me, appeared at intervals.

In an excellent and stimulating book, "Movies for the Million," Mr. Gilbert Seldes stresses the fact, which directors do not always grasp, that the movies must move. When they stop moving they become dull, and that is one of the reasons why I love a good Westerner. "The Great Train Robbery" in 1903, a one-reel film, was in essentials a Westerner, and was also "a turning point in the history of the motion picture." From the Westerner developed the gangster film. "The Virginian," to which I have already alluded, was one of the best Westerners I have seen, and a good Westerner takes a lot of beating. I used to revel in William S. Hart. I forget the name of the film, but he appeared in one grand scene. Bound to a chair, beyond the partition

which divided the room he could hear the villain assaulting the virtue of his beloved. What agony he registered! What iron determination he showed as he held his fettered wrists to the hot stove whither he had slowly, how terribly slowly, manœuvred his chair! What agony he suffered as strand by strand the bonds which held him parted! What grim foretaste of vengeance his features displayed as silently he unwound his lariat, and with what joy did we sympathise as, after one peep over the partition, we saw a pair of heels drawn up from the floor, pound madly, and with a last twitch grow deadly still! That was the stuff!

A superb Westerner, worthy to rank with film classics, I was lucky enough to see only the other day. "Stage-coach," with a great and inspired cast, is memorable not only for its photography and story-telling, but for its contrasts in characterisation and the brilliant direction of John Ford. Thomas Mitchell, well known for his cameo-like character studies, gave in it the finest performance of his career. The screen may not have produced any great actors, but great actors have gone to the screen, and after this Mitchell deserves to be numbered amongst them.

I am told that "Stage-coach" was not a great draw. This merely shows that the public are unable to discriminate between what is tolerable and what is really great. This is the sort of film which entitles the screen to rank as art, and art of a high order. "Stage-coach" is essentially a story which could adequately be told only as a film. The best melodrama I have ever seen on the stage was "The Girl of the Golden West" in New York. That too was a Westerner, but it lost very little on the stage as nearly all the scenes took place indoors and outside action was not necessary. Apart from outside shots, which give so much interest to a screen story, it is the play and interplay of character which creates interest, and the characters develop in "Stage-coach" as it continues its journey. The interior of the coach is really an interior setting. Gigantic convulsions of nature may thrill; one may be staggered at hearing that hundreds of thousands of pounds have been squandered by a producer with big ideas; a cast with 10,000 extras may be a big draw, but all this does not make

a good picture. One remembers the hosts of Egypt overwhelmed in the Red Sea in "The Ten Commandments"; one remembers the chariot-race in "Ben Hur," hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, floods and avalanches; but to me the eight characters in "Stage-coach" are far more real and exciting than any of these abnormalities.

A definition of the factors which go to make a good film have been given as "a good story, good acting, good camera work and good taste guided and governed by a producer with an original mind, who knows his business and has enough money to enable him to carry out his ideas. . . . The exact reversal, of course, implies the ingredients of a bad film." How many of the films we see fulfil the conditions laid down? Criticise the next one you go to from this angle.

The most successful actors and actresses on the screen have had one characteristic in common. To mention but a few, Charlie Chaplin, Marie Dressler, Will Rogers, Gracie Fields and, if only for the sake of "Mr. Deeds," I would add Gary Cooper, all had or have a perfectly natural kindliness, humanity and simplicity, or at any rate they have the power of conveying the atmosphere of these attributes directly to the audience. I cannot believe that, lacking them, they can impart such qualities to those who watch their acting. Simplicity is at the root of all greatness, but that alone is not demanded by the film-goer, though it will always draw if the story be good. It was the simplicity of "Stage-coach" which made it a great film. It was the sunny simplicity of Shirley Temple which made her a great box-office attraction; and much as I loathe child prodigies I could watch her with pleasure. When Hollywood forgets to be artificial, to overdo excessive sentimentality—it was Owen Wister who said that "mawkish sentimentality was the blue mould on the mind of the American people"—to produce films which one knows quite well will not merit the staggering spate of meaningless adjectives with which their advent is heralded, when, in fact, Hollywood attempts to produce a simple story of simple people in everyday life, it does it superlatively well; witness "Mrs. Miniver." I am still waiting to see a British film of which the same can be said.

## VIII

### *SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON DINING*

"I am sent to bid you come in to dinner."

"Much Ado About Nothing," Act II, Scene iii.

**W**HEN you have lived quite a long time it stands to reason that you must have eaten a good many dinners, say 15,000 or so anyway!

How few of these remain in the recollection. It is, of course, quite true that, anyhow before 1914, we ate a great deal too much. Since 1939 all our middle lines have got much more presentable. You can get a bit out of the front of your plus fours or trousers to darn the seat! In these days the thought of a sixteen-course dinner absolutely stuns the imagination. At least I think it was sixteen, but my wife assures me that I am wrong. She was a bride and the dinner was in her honour, so she ought to remember. Strange to relate, I can recall no feeling of repletion after such a gargantuan repast. As things are at present, though thank heaven! I was always thin, I have lost two stones since the war started.

Some of these meals I can recall.

One of the first was when I was a very young man. A friend of mine asked me to dine at his parents' house in London. I accepted and the evening sticks in my memory as one of the many occasions on which I did not shine. I had never met my friend's parents before. His father was a distinguished engineer and there were present, to my secret alarm, about ten people. These included one couple, he a dear old man with a white beard, she a rather formidable female in process of assuming male plumage.

At first all went well. I maintained a discreet silence as befitted my status. Whether it was the good dinner which inflamed my imagination, or whether I considered my duties as a guest rendered it incumbent on me to stimulate the conversation, I cannot now remember. The latter, however, turned by chance on schools and schoolmasters.



GARRY BRIDGE  
TUMMEL

FISHING ON THE TUMMEL





Having left school not so very long before, I felt, however mistakenly, that my views might be of interest. Clearing my throat and acutely self-conscious, I plunged with the terrifying blatancy of the ultra-timid into the maelstrom.

"Schoolmasters," said I, "seem to me dogmatic and assertive and in some respects ignorant about matters which are not their immediate concern."

Following a stunned silence which gave the company plenty of time to digest these aphorisms, the old lady, who had been regarding me for some time with marked disfavour, remarked in a tone registering a good deal of acidity that she would be interested to know if my generalisation applied to headmasters.

At this juncture I received a kick on the shin which caused me excruciating pain.

"Well," I stammered, "I don't quite know. I haven't had much experience of headmasters."

"In that case, you may be interested to learn," said this appalling female, "that my husband is the headmaster of Winchester."

The dear old gentleman with the beard smiled at me kindly across the table. "I am quite sure," said he, "that we all have a great deal to learn."

I do not know to this day who he was, but I have always loved his memory, and few would have dealt so kindly with an ignorant youth.

I remember another dinner at which I again made a fool of myself. I was dining with an old gentleman who was very good to me when I was a boy. He allowed me to shoot his stags and roe and, I think, appreciated my keenness. I had had a very good dinner at his London house. Then the butler appeared with port and cigars. He filled my glass with port and I proceeded to light my cigar and puff large clouds of smoke across the table. So intent was I on making sure that my cigar drew well, luxuriating in the sensation of feeling intensely grown up, that I failed to notice the expression on the face of my host. He leaned across the table and in the most courteous manner said, "Won't you have your port before you smoke?"

"No, thanks very much," I airily replied. "That's quite all right."

It was not until later that I realised the enormity of my offence. I was, perhaps, not altogether to blame. No one had ever told me that one should never smoke before drinking good wine, especially good port, and this was superlative port. Sherry is about the only exception to this rule.

A friend of mine who never smokes and never drinks anything but water, thereby missing two of the greatest pleasures in life, after partaking of a small but good dinner with two old bachelors who appreciated their comforts, remarked to me afterwards, "I got most frightfully bored! They kept passing their glasses under their noses and sniffing, as if they suspected each of trying to poison the other. Why couldn't they drink it up if they liked it? I had some once and thought it was beastly stuff. One said 'Dows '12?' or something like that, and the other wagged his head and answered 'Cockburn's '08.' As if it mattered!"

I think it is a great pity when boys are not taught to appreciate good wine, though their opportunities for exercising such training in the future are likely to be considerably curtailed. The appreciation of good food and wine seems to me just as worthy of cultivation as that of other forms of taste such as books, pictures, or even the fair sex. Chocolate-box prettiness in women may seem all that is desirable when we cannot tell the difference between a goose and a swan; inferior authors may stifle a liking for good literature; as we grow older we learn by experience that oleographs do not represent the summit of pictorial art, even though much of it may strike us as unnecessary. After all, one's powers of discrimination must be educated for the fullest enjoyment of anything, and a boy should be told what are the qualities to look for in the selection of good wine, just as in other matters. Every boy should be given a copy of "The Complete Wine Book" by Schoonmaker and Marvel when he arrives at an age to appreciate its contents, or some such volume.

How lucky are those countries which provide pleasant and cheap wine for their inhabitants. Personally I would seldom touch spirits if I could get wine, for wine maketh glad the heart of man; mellows temper; blinds us to the

failings of our fellow-mortals, they also to ours; and stimulates friendships. The very names make poetry, and the bouquet of a good hock or moselle brings to mind sunlit slopes and the scent of hay fields in summer-time. Yet in this country, save in very small circles, how little is good wine appreciated. The majority of people would scarcely murmur if it was poured into tin mugs!

I once lunched with an acquaintance in Paris who enquired during the course of the meal if I liked brandy. I told him that I did, and nothing more was said at the time. After the meal, with certain ceremony, he handed me a glass of brandy.

To say that I have never tasted brandy like it would be an understatement. It was like nothing I had ever known. My host was, though I did not know it, in the business of wine, and the beverage which he was kind enough to give me was unprocurable on the market. To state that it was round, soft, mellow and came softly to the palate, is but a bald recapitulation of facts. It would have needed a Villon to do it justice. As the French say, "*Il fait la queue du paon dans la bouche.*" It did. I tried later to tell a young friend of mine what it was like and groped in my mind for a simile. "It was like—it was like warm milk!" said I.

"Then why," he very pertinently enquired, "don't you drink warm milk?"

Why don't I?

Cocktails are not so modern as is sometimes supposed. Twenty-five or thirty years ago one establishment, I forget in which country it was situated, advertised among other attractions twenty-five different sorts of cocktails. They are not a form of drink of which I am particularly fond, but I always remember one.

I was staying in Angus with Antony Lyell, who took me to dine with some neighbours. We were ushered in by a butler of somewhat lugubrious appearance. He looked like a rather unhappy elder of the Scottish Kirk. Introductions having been made, this gentleman appeared carrying a tray of drinks. Some resembled a particular kind of red cough-mixture. "Have a cocktail," said our host. I took one. It was very good, and to all seeming

fairly innocuous. After a time I experienced a pleasing glow. "Have another," said our host hospitably.

"They're not very strong, are they?" I asked.

He smiled. "They're all right," said he. "Quite harmless. They're called Angus cocktails."

Encouraged by the warmth, for we had had a cold drive, our reception and the friendly atmosphere, I took another.

"Good, aren't they?" said our host. "I don't know the ingredients myself. It's a secret of our butler's."

I took a generous gulp—and felt as if I had been kicked by a large cart-horse full in the chest. They were good, and I take off my hat to that butler. The rest of the evening passed in a pleasant haze, but I was glad that Antony was driving the car when we left.

I once encountered a different type of host. He talked about food throughout the dinner, which was lavish but, like his conversation, lacking in taste. We drank claret, that prince of wines, and it was quite good. The men being left alone, he crashed a bottle, three-quarters full of brandy, on the table, exclaiming, "Now, boys, we've got to finish that!"

I had a glass, and quite decided that I did not want another. With the overbearing hospitality of the indiscriminating host he pressed me to have some more. I politely declined. He rose, somewhat hesitatingly, to his feet, and swaying slightly advanced on me, brandishing the bottle. "We've got to finish it!" he roared.

Protesting, I gently laid my fingers over my glass. He promptly poured the brandy over them in an endeavour to fill the latter. I hurriedly withdrew my hand, quite expecting to find that the skin had been scorched, for the stuff was like corrosive acid. Our glasses filled, he lapsed into further reminiscences about food. Pigs' trotters and stuffed prunes (though stuffed with what, I never discovered!) seemed to be his favourite dishes. "Drink up, boys. Drink up and have some more." He meant to be kind but he was very tedious.

On the walls hung some horrible representations of cattle and sheep posing self-consciously before impossible backgrounds. I, appreciatively, drew his attention to one of these works of art, and whilst his attention was engaged

flicked the brandy under the table. This feat I succeeded in accomplishing no less than three times without being detected. What the maid thought in the morning I have often wondered. Once I must have hit a dog, for with a startled howl it shot, his skin no doubt badly singed, from under the table and made for the door, which I hastily opened.

Then, the bottle at last finished, we joined the ladies. Pursuing a very wavering course to a large armchair, my host flung himself into it and gazed, glassy-eyed, at the surrounding company. Then he gave a loud hiccough. "Boys," he said pathetically, "you've done me!"

My wife did not consider the evening a success, and even accused me of having had too much to drink!

One of the most uncomfortable dinners I ever experienced was when staying with an exalted personage who had been kind enough to ask me to stalk. I was placed next but two to my hostess. As we sat down to dinner the chair on my left was vacant. Almost immediately, however, a lady slid into it with a murmured remark. I had not been introduced to her, but after a little conversation came to the conclusion that she was my hostess's secretary. She did not appear to take much interest in either me or the proceedings. Our talk rather languished until the footman (for in those days footmen did exist) handed her the vegetables, and, his task accomplished, turned away. Seizing him by the sleeve she exclaimed in a loud voice, "Here, George, I'll have some more of those greens. It's my birthday to-day!"

The frozen silence which ensued was broken as she turned to me and in a rather hoarse voice remarked, "You're ver' keen on shtalking, aren't you?"

I replied that I was.

"Well! I'm coming out shtalking with you. I wan' you teach me *all* about it!"

Acutely conscious that everyone at the table was listening to our conversation, I sheepishly replied that I hardly felt capable of teaching her anything. At the same moment I intercepted a very searching look from my host at the far end of the table, and from the other a piercing glance from my hostess.

I felt as I imagine a rear-gunner must feel when caught in the rays of converging searchlights.

"Oh yes, you can," prattled this trying female, adding with a nauseating leer, "You could teach me anything!"

I then experienced that conflicting and unpleasant sensation known as feeling hot and cold all over.

Hurriedly I gulped down a drink.

When once again comparatively normal, and advisedly I use the adverb, for I did not really feel normal for days, dinner was nearly over.

"Port, sir," murmured a pontifical voice in my ear.

"Please," I murmured thankfully. (This time, forty years on, I did not light a cigar!) A tug at my arm drew my attention. I turned balefully.

"I never get a glass of port in this house," murmured a plaintive voice.

"For obvious reasons!" thought I, and loudly exclaimed, "Oh!"

'Oh!' at any rate, was fairly non-committal.

Feeling the undoubted tension, our hostess swept the ladies out of the dining-room, my companion tacking, rather erratically, towards the door. There was the usual male chat, which lasted for ten minutes, and we prepared to leave. I was nearest the door. I opened it, and at the motion of my host's hand prepared to lead the procession. Glancing ahead, a door at the far end of the corridor suddenly opened, and there appeared the lady of the house propelling, and at the same time supporting, the dilapidated figure of my late dinner companion. To my intense relief they swirled through a door invisible to me, and vanished.

Later I was told that in an excess of emotion the culprit had endeavoured to kiss everyone in the room with the exception of her employer. This erotic display had necessitated the expulsion which I had witnessed. Thank heaven it had materialised prior to our arrival! My hostess, who was a kind and considerate as well as a great lady, spoke to me of the incident during the next morning, without, I am thankful to say, imputing any blame to me. Shortly afterwards she changed her secretary.

It was a harassing experience.

The only other occasion sufficiently devastating to be compared with the above occurred in connection with the dinner of a club of which I and a great friend of mine whom I will call Jim were members. Jim was secretary. He had asked me to meet him at his hotel and have a glass of sherry before going on to the restaurant where the club dinner was taking place.

When I arrived I found him rather perturbed. I asked the reason.

"Well, I'm a bit fussed," said he. "Old Charles is a very good chap but he's put me in rather an awkward position. He very much wanted to come to this dinner and asked me to take him as my guest. I couldn't very well refuse, though I don't much want to as he's rather inclined to get a bit fresh. He came in half an hour ago, said he was very exhausted and had a large brandy-and-soda. Now he's dressing. I hope he keeps sober. I'm next the chairman and he must be on my other side."

I reassured him and Charles appeared. He looked all right and immediately ordered more sherries.

Then we started.

Charles was very affable and looking forward to his dinner.

"And don't forget, old boy," he announced, "that I'm going to pay for the drinks."

Jim demurred but he insisted. "And we'll start with a magnum," he finished.

"A bottle will be quite enough," said Jim.

"All right then," said Charles. "We'll start with a bottle."

We arrived. Jim had to offer his guest sherry, which he accepted.

Then we sat down to dinner. Each table held about eight and I was opposite Jim on the chairman's left, with Charles next him.

Jim kept leaning forward in an endeavour to screen Charles's activities from his neighbour. With the arrival of the fish Charles had made a marked diminution in the contents of the bottle. Jim was looking rather anxious. Then I saw Charles put his hand on his sleeve and say something.



"What?" said Jim.

"Is one," I heard in a carefully enunciated whisper, which reached me clearly, "allowed to speak to his lor'ship?"

"Yes, yes, of course," said Jim with false heartiness.

Charles leaned across him, wafting a blend of brandy, sherry and champagne into the ether, whose currents, I hoped for Jim's sake, were not tending in a north-easterly direction.

"I want," he began, "to thank your lor'ship for your kin'ness to some of my young Yeomanry oshiffers."

"Eh! I don't quite know—" began the chairman.

"Quar'ered in your park! Young oshiffers parked park." He gave a giggle. "Ver' much obliged."

"Oh! Not at all. Not at all," replied the chairman, giving Jim a quizzical glance.

"Park oshiffers in park," I heard again. Then he sank back in his chair and had another go at the remains of the bottle.

There had just occurred in the Press a long discussion as to the merits and demerits of stag hunting, and a certain Mr. Stebbing had created a disturbance at a meet by brandishing banners and placards inscribed "Down with stag hunting."

At the close of the dinner the chairman rose to make, as was his custom, a few remarks on events which had occurred since we had last dined together. He had got well under way when a hoarse whisper drew my attention to the continued existence of Charles.

"I wanna know 'bout Mr. Stebbing," he wheezed.

"For heaven's sake wait till later," hissed Jim.

His friend was not to be put down like this.

"I think," he haughtily retorted, "you're mos' 'fensive." Leaning forward and attempting to rise, an attempt which, at least, was frustrated, he directed an ingratiating leer upwards at the speaker. At the same time he enunciated in a loud voice, "I wanna know 'bout Mr. Stebbing." The last word was uttered with extraordinary venom.

The startled chairman looked down. "Eh! What? What was that," he enquired.

"Wha' 'bout Mr. Stebbing?"

"Mr. Stebbing? Who's he?"

"Wha' 'bout Mr. Stebbing? Nasty man."

"Would you mind postponing your enquiries till later?" said the chairman icily.

"Oh!" shrieked Charles suddenly, and subsided. Jim's well-directed kick under the table had, at any rate, had the desired effect. It had silenced him. I was convulsed with laughter.

"Did you see what happened?" Jim asked me in great agitation when the formal proceedings were over.

I was still weak with laughter at the sight of the comatose figure beside his empty chair.

"I should think I did," I gasped. "I thought you were going to kick his leg off!"

Later Jim deposited his guest at the hotel and watched him escorted inside.

A few days afterwards I had occasion to go there.

"I was sorry to see," said I to the porter, "that Major —— wasn't very well the other night."

"Lor' bless you, sir," said he, "that was nothing. I've often seen him kiss the cab-horse good-night in the old days. 'E'd do it now if it wasn't for them taxis."

The laugh on this occasion was on Jim. On another, when we were younger and more affluent, it was on my old friend Colonel Brocklehurst.

"Come and dine at Claridge's to-morrow," said he. "Charlie Bury's coming." This was he who afterwards led one of the first expeditions to Mount Everest.

We had a very good dinner—you ought at Claridge's—one course consisting of asparagus. We all had some, and then the waiter reappeared with the dish. My fellow-guest had another helping. So did I. Brock, rather sourly I thought, refused. Later he was presented with the bill, and we tactfully looked the other way. Brock gave a strangled exclamation. "I say, this is a bit thick," said he. The account came to over £7! Each bit of asparagus was eighteenpence. I wished I had known when I was eating it! So did Brock, and we didn't hear the last of our dinner at Claridge's for some time!

Here I must say something of Brock. I first met Henry Courtney Brocklehurst in 1914. For nearly thirty years he

was my greatest friend. Extremely good-looking, with a tall, tireless and athletic figure, he was at times moody and difficult to approach, but always loyal to his friends and the soul of generosity. To aid one of them in trouble he would have given the shirt off his back.

Originally in the 10th Royal Hussars, he later, in the First World War, was seconded to the R.F.C. as it then was. After the war he spent much time in undertaking many journeys to Africa, which he knew as did few others. Later he extended his travels to Asia, being the only Englishman I know to have shot the Giant Panda. The specimen he secured was the centre of attraction in the British section of the Berlin International Exhibition of 1937.

For nine years, prior to his visit to Asia, he was Game Warden in the Sudan. The Zoo at Khartoum was largely his creation, and one in which he took the greatest pride. It he raised to a very high level. A fine shot, always shooting from the left shoulder, he was extremely particular as to what he fired at, and I do not suppose that during many of his long and arduous expeditions he fired more than a dozen cartridges in all. Unnecessary butchery he hated, and was not popular at times for action he took against those who had so offended, nor for his outspoken denunciations. During his tenure of office he wrote "*Game Animals of the Sudan*," a work of great value to any sportsman intending to visit this part of Africa. Possessing a keen sense of humour, to any task which he took in hand he brought unwearrying energy, great knowledge, and sound common sense.

I saw him last when he was doing a course at Loch Ailort in 1941. Shortly afterwards he left for Kenya with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and went from there to Burma. I had letters from him at intervals. Then in 1942 they ceased. I heard later that he was in command of the rearguard during the retreat. His force endured terrible sufferings in the attempt to reach Assam. From the sole survivor came the final word. He had seen Brock on an unmanageable raft being whirled away down a flooded river. So the curtain falls.

"What a sad end to his wonderful Elizabethan career,"

wrote one of his friends, and with the great adventurers of that age he had much in common.

His sister sent me the following lines which may stand for his epitaph:

Change was his mistress,  
Chance his counsellor.  
Love could not hold him  
Nor duty forge a chain.  
The wild seas and the mountains called him,  
The grey dawns saw his camp fires in the rain.

So he passes, a great and in some ways a tragic figure, beloved by many, the call of the wild for ever in his ears, leaving behind him a memory cherished by his friends, the record of his adventurous career to the majority unknown. After life's fitful fever may he rest in peace.

The last meal I had at Claridge's was in June 1939, with Count Maurice Potocki, the head of the Polish Hunting Association. He had come over to attend a dinner of the Shikar Club. He left Warsaw in the morning, had tea in London and attended the dinner that night. He was returning to Poland the next day. There was only one thought in the minds of all of us.

"Do you think there will be war?" I asked.

"Of course there'll be war," he answered quietly.

This calm certainty and absence of wishful thinking staggered me. Here we were in a comfortable hotel, normal life going on around us apparently as usual. The sun shone, the glass and silver gleamed, waiters moved noiselessly about their tasks, glittering cars sped swiftly and smoothly past the windows. The green leaves in the park murmured restfully, and yet war was a certainty!

"When?" I asked.

"July if you want it, September if the Germans do."

"We certainly don't want it," said I.

"Then September," he said sombrely.

After the Germans had overrun Poland, Potocki was offered the post of German Quisling. Needless to say, he refused.

Occasionally unfortunate incidents occur at banquets, and though I was not present some have been related to me. An A.D.C. of my acquaintance was in attendance

on a gentleman in high position who was not unnoted for a certain degree of parsimony. At a large banquet the place of honour in the centre of the table was occupied by a silver dish bearing every variety of fruit. There were peaches, nectarines, grapes, pineapples and many other varieties. At the close of the dinner he said to his next-door neighbour, a charming young *débutante*, "What would you like now?"

"Oh," said she, with the healthy appetite of youth, "I should like one of those lovely peaches."

"Well, you can't," said he. "They're all artificial. But you can have a banana."

At the same party, which was followed by a dance, a visitor entering the supper-room in search of sustenance espied a succulent-looking meringue looking rather lonely. Approaching it with a view to its annexation, he was rather put off on finding two articles known I believe as dentures embedded in the outer crust.

The host and hostess believed—this was long before the present war—in democracy, and devoted one afternoon a week to being matey with the staff. The story goes that a visitor endeavouring to pay his respects rang the bell, and after a prolonged period of waiting repeated his effort. The door was eventually opened by a sacerdotal butler who was on the point of enquiring the visitor's identity when a hand in his rear tapped him smartly on the shoulder and an elderly female voice archly called out, "Tip it." The visitor was so shattered at this display of comradeship that he incontinently turned and fled.

One of the most revolting dinners I ever had was in a house on the west coast of Scotland. We had spent the morning spearing skates in the waters of a sea-loch which wound its way among the low hills. It was a lovely day and we drifted slowly along the shore scrutinising every likely patch of sand. Skates, as you will know, are flat fish with long tails. Their undersides are fashioned into a horrible, twisted caricature of the human face, with dreadful pallid lips. Even to look at them gives me the creeps. We speared quite a number of the nasty creatures and my hostess remarked, "You're in for a treat to-night."

Always ready for a treat, I enquired of what this particular one consisted.

"You're going to have skate for dinner!"

Thinking that their edibility must be strongly at variance with their looks, I awaited dinner with some trepidation. One can never gauge the taste of others without experience.

"Have you ever eaten skate before?" enquired the lady of the house as we took our places.

"Never," I replied.

"Then you *are* in for a treat," she gaily responded.

I could almost see her lips smacking. The skate appeared on a large dish. I was handed a plate of what looked like coagulated blotting-paper interspersed with innumerable small bones swimming in water. Regarding this mess with some misgiving, but thinking it might taste better than it looked, I gingerly attempted a small mouthful. My hostess's expectant gaze was glued on my expression. This, trying to play the perfect gentleman, I disguised so far as I was able. Bravely I took another small mouthful.

"Well, what do you think of it? Isn't it delicious? Tell me quite candidly."

The last sentence did it.

"Well, quite candidly," I said, furtively wiping away a large number of small bones, "quite candidly, as you ask me to be frank, I have never eaten anything I disliked more."

My hostess's face fell, then brightened as she realised that there would be more skating for those who appreciated it.

My host, I remarked, who had maintained a masterly policy of glum silence throughout the meal, thrust his plate aside with an air of relief and threw me a grateful glance. He and I dined off cold ham.

What an expert cook could do with such material I have never had the opportunity nor the inclination to discover. He would have to be a great expert to succeed, though success is possible, so the epicures assure me. Skate, however, so far as I am concerned, is permanently off the menu.

It used, in the old days, to be customary for ladies of a

musical bent to bring their music when invited to partake of the hospitality of their friends. On one occasion, when we were living in London, my wife threw a small party. To it she invited a musical gentleman and his wife. Crossing the hall, on our route to the dining-room, I noticed a smallish, triangular-shaped package. I speculated as to its contents, but, being well house-trained, refrained from any comment. After dinner my doubts were resolved.

"Won't you sing something to your harp?" said my wife to that of the musician. Murmuring acquiescent throat noises, the lady shot into the hall, reappearing with the package I had noticed. Removing the wrappings, the contents displayed themselves as an article known, I believe, as a Celtic harp.

Seating herself on a low stool, clad in what ladies call a 'wrapper,' a long, indeterminate, shapeless garment of green, the songstress plucked a few chords from the instrument, gazing the while in a wistful manner at a point immediately above my head. We all sat round in respectful silence.

"Years ago," she began in a conversational voice, "many year ago"—ping-ping from the harp—"Ase and his loved one"—ping-ping—"set out across the dark, windswept waters of the ocean"—ping—"to where the Gods of Love beckoned from the Western Isles"—ping-ping-ping.

"Really!" said one of the audience brightly. "And who were they, and what did they do next?"

The speaker had not realised that this opening was merely the preliminary recitative to a bit of old Gaelic folklore. I got the giggles and had to leave hurriedly. When I returned a quarter of an hour later, the saga was in full swing and lasted for another ten minutes.

My brother, as I think I have already mentioned, was not so frequently as I in the habit of committing social solecisms. On one occasion when we were in our teens (an expression which in my younger days I always imagined had a slightly improper flavour, though I have never been able to trace this reaction to its source) my father had to dinner a very eminent surgeon on whom he was anxious to make a good impression. After dinner, the ladies having

left, our elders were enjoying their port and deep in conversation when a small voice suddenly broke in on them.

"Johnston," it said, "pass the biscuits." No mister, doctor or any other prefix! Just "Johnston!" Johnston obligingly passed the biscuits, but I still remember my father's face and the worried expression of the biscuit-eater as he realised the breach of good manners which he had committed.

"Manners makyth man" is the motto of the only school I should have chosen had I not gone to Eton. The truth of its motto is forced on one with increasing insistence with advancing years. A young gentleman with whom I am intimately acquainted, discussing manners with me, remarked ingenuously, "Yes, it's a jolly good thing to have some. You can get away with things much more easily!"

He is, of course, perfectly right. Having discovered so profound a truth at an early age, it is to be hoped that he will experience its benefit by practice.

A similar idea, put somewhat differently, was developed by an acquaintance who was talking to a group of intimate friends. "How I should like," said he, "to have a title!" This I may say, was many years ago.

"Don't be such a snob," said one. "Why do you wish that?"

"Oh! it's not snobbery," replied the other, "but if I wanted to be, I could be so much more effectively rude, to people whom I really disliked."

Certainly the remark of the Hanoverian duchess to the footman who had bumped her chair would not have sounded so pungent if uttered by one of less exalted station.

"I wish to God," she remarked acidly, "that you would keep your great greasy stomach off the back of my chair." The stomach, needless to say, was removed.

"Autres temps, autres mœurs," say the French, and as our own poet wrote:

The wildest dreams of Kew  
Are the facts of Khatmandhu,  
And the crimes of Clapham  
Chaste in Martaban.

It has at certain periods of history been quite the correct



thing for a gentleman to maintain a mistress. No one regarded it as a breach of morals, and so long as others' feelings were unhurt, no great harm may have been done. When in any age the rebel begins to kick against accepted conventions, even though the moral issue involved may be obscured, trouble starts. Manners, and this is the point, are in any case concerned.

I do not know whether manners entered into the question when the duchess made her famous remark. Probably not. At the present day, or rather five, ten, fifteen, twenty or thirty years ago, I cannot imagine anyone, even a duchess, speaking thus to a servant. Anyone so doing, at any rate during recent years, would probably have met with a retort such as a newly engaged butler of distinguished record made to the wife of his moneyed employer when told to bring the coffee. Exasperated by a continued series of what he considered 'bloomers' he courteously replied, "I think, madam, what you require is a menial—not a servant," and left the apartment with dignified tread.

That manners vary with the religious trend of the moment is true; that the truest form of religion cultivates good manners is also true. When to turn the other cheek is a problem difficult to decide. During the struggle for existence being waged, the outcome literally a matter of life or death, an incident occurred which was given great prominence in the Press. A Nazi prisoner spat in the face of a British colonel. The cases being reversed, there is but little doubt that a British prisoner would have been shot dead on the spot. The colonel quietly wiped his cheek and told the captive that he was very lucky that it was he whom he had insulted and not one of his sergeants.

Letters appeared which either criticised his action or lauded it. I have no wish to be guilty of irreverence, but in this dilemma two incidents come to my recollection.

One was the publication of a tract, when I was a small boy, entitled "What would Jesus have done?" The other was a conversation I had with a great friend of mine, years older than myself, on the subject of religion. I do not think he had been to a church for years, but he displayed many of the qualities which not only I, but many better

men, admire. "It doesn't matter what anyone says," he finished. "One thing is quite certain: Christ was the greatest gentleman who ever walked the earth."

I wonder what He would have done in the colonel's place?

"Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you" is a pretty good guide to a code of manners. The duchess probably never for one moment considered the feelings of the footman when she thus addressed him. If she had possessed a code of real manners, as distinct from an artificial one (I am sure her manners at Court were impeccable), she would never have spoken as she did. But in those days, of course, the feelings of so-called inferiors were not studied.

Of one dinner I am even now somewhat ashamed. It is the only one at which I really 'passed out,' and I do not consider that I was to blame. You shall judge. I was staying with a friend of mine from Oxford. We were both at Christchurch and he was the youngest of five brothers. I was the only other gun at the remote shooting-lodge in Inverness-shire which they had rented. The weather was very stormy and the sport not so good as we had hoped. Instead of shooting every day and killing over a hundred brace, we could only shoot on occasions and never killed more than sixty. But every bird was a real snorter. We were hanging about one afternoon with nothing very much to do when the conversation, I forget exactly why, turned on feats of walking. My friend was a very good walker and began arguing with one of his elder brothers as to what he could do.

"I bet you you won't walk to W— (just over seven miles) in under an hour, fair heel and toe," said his brother.

"What will you bet?"

"I'll bet you the best dinner to be got in London when we get back."

"At the Café Royal."

"Yes," said his brother, laughing.

He set off. The rest of the family and I followed in a car, and he did it comfortably with several minutes to spare.

Then we discussed the dinner. As I had been present they all insisted that I must attend, and fixed the date just before we again 'went up' in October. I must have been about nineteen or twenty.

Well, we started off with bird's nest soup and a magnum of champagne. I got along pretty well with the champagne, in fact I was told afterwards that I was a great success. I don't remember very much about it. Disaster came subsequently. Everything was *couleur de rose*, my hosts the best of good fellows, and my friend the finest walker I had ever seen. Unfortunately, whilst my mind was occupied with thoughts such as these my brandy glass, at which I sipped absently, was surreptitiously refilled as fast as it became depleted. I was much too happy to notice anything.

Then we left *en route* for a music hall. Here the party separated as we could not all get seats together, and I was left in charge of the eldest brother, a man of about thirty-five. I remember a great blur of light and a man in a dicky and a battered hat, with a red nose, singing something. The whole building suddenly started to whizz round at an alarming pace and I felt very ill. I was very ill. My guardian, who must have found me the most infernal nuisance, was kindness itself. He escorted me to a hansom and offered to take me home. I refused, and eventually reached my parents' house feeling a little better. I paid the hansom, somehow or other got upstairs to my room at the top of the house, undressed and, bliss! got into bed.

Feeling awful the next morning, I had some difficulty in pacifying my mother's enquiries as to why I had not appeared at breakfast. I think she knew, and being a wise woman said very little. I had had my lesson. Never since have I thus exceeded.

Another dinner had also, for me, a disastrous sequel. We were staying with some friends in Sussex, and they by way of entertainment took us to a race meeting. I do not attend race meetings very frequently, and when I do it is the people who entertain me rather than the horses. Watching people never fails to interest me even when alone, though it is pleasant to have some sympathetic

companion with whom to interchange ideas. Of that noble animal, the horse, I know nothing, and seldom do I feel so stultified as when being escorted round stables. For the comments of the ignoramus are apt to land him in a hole. I once remarked, "What a nice face!" and the exhibitor took it to apply to his wife. I hastily supplemented it by adding, "And what quarters," feeling sure that this could not be misconstrued. The latter remark is always fairly safe unless the animal in question slopes noticeably at one end. It is better on occasions of this sort to follow the advice of the witty French duke who laid down that "Silence is the surest course for the man who mistrusts himself," even though the latter lays himself open to a charge of taciturnity.

At the races in question I was immediately enthralled by the spectacle of humanity, so to speak, on the loose, and quickly singled out certain noticeable figures. There was one elderly gentleman with a mulberry face, a toothbrush moustache and an air of great certitude. Then I saw him accost my friends and, as I stood near, was drawn into his orbit.

"Come and have a drink," said he.

The amount of lubrication regarded as necessary for the human form on such occasions is astonishing.

We repaired to the car enclosure and I very soon identified the vehicle at which we were likely to halt. It was an enormous Rolls Royce painted red.

"What'll you have?" asked our host. "Whisky, beer, gin, port, sherry? Say the word."

The Rolls reminded me of one of those conjurer's bottles which produce the drink named in the shortest possible time. It even produced vodka and absinthe. Then I was given a cigar; for Mulberry Face was nothing if not hospitable.

We staggered back to the Members' Enclosure, saw the last race and returned home. I thought it was the end, if not of a perfect day, of at any rate one which had added to my experiences. Not a bit of it.

"We're dining with Mulberry Face to-night," announced my friend.

At 7.50 we drew up at a mansion situated in extensive

grounds, with a southern aspect. It was commodious, well appointed and fitted with, I was quite certain, every modern convenience.

Mulberry Face greeted us before a table on which were displayed bottles and decanters which appeared to me to stretch half-way across the room. We had sherry.

"Sure there's nothing else you'd rather have?"

Sherry was good enough for me.

Then a door opened and a young lady slunk in. I say 'slunk' because she was tall, slinky, with a good figure, lustrous eyes, and would have been pretty but for her mouth, which was like a pig's with protruding teeth. Her lips and nails were blood-red. I was quite sure that her toe-nails were of a similar hue had they been visible. She wore a tightly fitting black dress, at least in front. When she turned round I saw that there was no dress at the back. For this omission, hers was some excuse: I have seldom seen a better. It appeared to me that on any sudden contortion, such as a sneeze, her garment, or what there was of it, would fall off.

"My daughter-in-law," said Mulberry Face, and made introductions.

"Pleased to meet you," said the lady.

"Chips has just flown back from Deauville," said our host, adding: "Where's Bonzo?"

"He's dressing," said Chips.

Presently Bonzo, who, I concluded, was her husband, appeared.

He was tall and thin, with a narrow head, closely placed eyes, an enormous nose, tightly plastered hair and a weak chin. He wore diamond and onyx cuff-links.

"Seen the car?" he asked his father after the usual preliminaries.

"Yes."

"Cost a cool two thousand," said Bonzo.

I wondered what a hot two thousand would have produced.

We had a wonderful dinner. Iced grape-fruit, soup, salmon, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, a sweet with hot chocolate sauce, and savoury. I had long ceased to try to enumerate the drinks, and refused everything as

I was quite certain that champagne would eventually materialise. It did, very excellent champagne too. Then came coffee, port, brandy, cigars, and we repaired to another room.

To my horror, I saw a table covered with green baize and two packs of cards. Hastily counting heads, I was relieved to find that I was safe so far as bridge was concerned.

"Now we'll have a little friendly game," said Mulberry Face, almost affectionately.

"I'd much sooner be left out if you don't mind," I muttered.

"No, no. Come on. We must have a little fun."

Fun! I loathe cards in any form, chiefly because I am persistently unlucky.

"Really I'd rather not," said I.

The type to which my temporary host belonged have one failing. They cannot take 'No' for an answer and will insist on any and every one joining in the particular form of amusement for which they personally have a predilection. So it was on this occasion. I was almost forced into a seat beside Chips. I could not even look at her beautiful back.

"Now what shall it be?" said her father-in-law. "Come on, Chips."

"The usual," said Chips.

"All right. The usual."

What the usual was I had not the faintest idea.

"Cut for deal," said Bonzo, who had assumed an unusually businesslike air, producing a pad and a pencil. I sulkily reflected that they might have had enough of this sort of thing at Deauville. I picked up a card.

"Your deal," said Chips.

I dealt.

I do not to this day know what the beastly game was called.

Everybody turned up cards or asked for others.

"Another one all round?" said Bonzo.

They all got another.

"Bad luck," said Chips.

"That puts you down sixteen shillings," said Bonzo.

I felt that I was lucky that it was not sixteen pounds.

There is no need to describe the rest of the nightmare in detail. When we got up from the table an hour and a half later, after Bonzo had finished doing his sums I had lost £3, 16s. 6d.

"I'll send you round a cheque in the morning," said I, feeling murderous, and thinking of G. G. and the Gaiety. There are so many pleasanter ways of losing what little money one has than over a stupid game of cards to total strangers.

"That'll be all right," said Mulberry Face. "Have another drink."

He was hospitable. I mentally totalled up the results of the evening: Dinner for two, 30s.; Champagne, £1; Cigars and drinks, say 12s. I was still at least 14s. 6d. down.

Chips certainly had a most lovely back. I would charge myself half a crown for each look.

I blinked my eyes rapidly.

"Have you got something in your eye?" asked Mulberry Face solicitously.

"It's all right," I answered. I even blushed.

"Bonzo," said Chips, "give me my scarf. It's getting a bit chilly."

She put on her scarf. Then she sneezed and hitched up her dress. I was still at least half a crown down. But if she hadn't asked for her scarf I might have been well up.

I remember with pleasure dinners with the Caledonian Society at Oxford, John Elphinstone in the chair, when Simon Ramsay and Antony Lyell made me laugh so much that the years rolled back and it seemed impossible that I should be leaving the City of Youth in the morning and not staying up until the end of the term with everyone else.

Many dinners in many parts of the world are recalled by chance at different times, though without any clear-cut incidents which cause them to stand out.

I recall dinners in Japan before the Japanese had become the Nazis of the East, and their country to me was a land of fairylike romance and its inhabitants charming

and courteous to the stranger within their gates. Fireflies flitted in the dusk, and in the dawn came the chiming of temple bells. Alas! that the change should be so great. My attitude perhaps may be forgiven me, since Lafcadio Hearn, after years of residence there, completely altered his views. He published many books lauding Japan and the Japanese, but ended by writing "I hate the Japanese." Married to a Japanese lady, though his general outlook had changed, his opinion of Japanese women remained the same.

On one occasion on a visit to Russia, my wife and I were taken by some friends to dine at a private house. We had an excellent meal, but the sequel is what remains in my mind. We were ushered into a large room with a polished floor and a certain amount of furniture close to the walls, where it had evidently been moved in order to leave an open space. We had been there for some time, chatting, and I was standing with my back to the open space in the centre in a dim, though scarcely religious, atmosphere. Suddenly a spotlight was switched on and there was a sort of thud just behind me. Startled by the sudden glare, I turned hastily round as a large white object suddenly bounded into view from the surrounding gloom. It was apparently, such was my first thought, about to make an unprovoked assault on me. I was relieved to find that I was mistaken, as, my eyes becoming properly focussed, I was able to distinguish a female dancer. Practically in the state in which she would repair to her bath, she proceeded to execute the most lively and fantastic steps and gyrations to the accompaniment of loud applause.

It was an unnerving episode.

Another dinner, again with Russian hosts, in Tientsin; and if you have never dined with Russians, particularly in the East, the word 'drink' means nothing. I know we had cocktails, white wine, red wine, champagne and liqueurs, and I know that I had sixteen whiskies-and-sodas between the dinner and the dawn. I certainly should have collapsed in a temperate climate long before I got half-way to double figures. They were small and not strong whiskies-and-sodas, I admit, and in Tientsin a drink went in at your mouth and came straight out at your pores, so



that it is not so bad as it sounds. I was completely sober when I went to bed.

I remember dinners in Chinese inns, eaten on mud 'kangs' with the temperature below zero when it was impossible to see across the room because of the acrid smoke from the fire of camel dung with which we were endeavouring to conquer the cold; dinners in the heat of Java, and on the cold hillsides of British Columbia; in palaces in India, and amid soaking forests in New Zealand, where I once lived for two days on squirrels; in fishing-camps in Canada, where salmon was the mainstay of every meal for a fortnight, until one loathed the sight of salmon, and almost equally bacon and eggs and tea, the only alternatives; in luxury hotels in Singapore, in America and Australia; a dinner in Fukiers House in the Old Town market-place in Warsaw, which until shortly before the present war had been in possession of the same family since the fifteenth century and was famous for its wines, when a lady went all Slav and burst into tears on our host's shoulder; and dinners in little French restaurants in Paris where the casual tourist never goes and you can enjoy food such as you can get nowhere else.

One of the last occasions on which I visited Paris was about a year before the outbreak of the present war. One evening I dined with Count Jaroslav Potocki. Later we went on to the Casino de Paris and saw a very good show. Part of it was given in the open air before Their Majesties King George and Queen Elizabeth on their official visit to France. Having seen the performance, we went on to several restaurants. At one of these we encountered a Spanish lady of gipsy origin. She could talk no English, and I have to rely on what was told to me by my companion, who acted as interpreter. She asked to look at his hand, which she studied, and then turned to me. She talked excitedly for some moments and he said, "She says she sees something very bad in your hand." Naturally I asked what she saw. I could get no very satisfactory explanation, but she reiterated that "something bad was coming to me." She was perfectly right.

Dinners I recall in the Schwartz Ferkel in Berlin; in mountain huts in Austria; in ships, where the choice of

food is limited and everything tastes exactly the same; and on innumerable trains. Of the latter, I remember one with great distinctness. We had travelled, my companions and I, from the confines of China across the Gobi Desert for over three months until we reached the Trans-Siberian railway at Omsk. We got on the train and ordered fried fish and beer. We had not tasted fried fish nor quaffed beer—quaffed is the right word, long slow lingering quaff, knowing that when that was ended you could have another—for a great deal longer a period than three months, and to really appreciate fried fish or beer you must have been similarly circumstanced. Enjoyment may be stimulated by imagination, but to savour the full pleasure of such delights the intervening period should be short and swift. Were it possible in the course, say, of an hour to transfer oneself after a few weeks or months of strenuous toil and exercise with the physical fitness predicated by such to the Savoy and, after a hot bath and a change into civilised garments, enjoy dinner with a companion, both of one's own choosing, such a dinner would transcend all others which could be imagined.

And yet, all said and done, all comparisons made, is the happiness derived from any dinner exceeded by that which we experience when we sit down to one in our own home surrounded by those we love? It is only when we are no longer able to do so that we realise what we have lost.

## IX

### ODDS AND ENDS

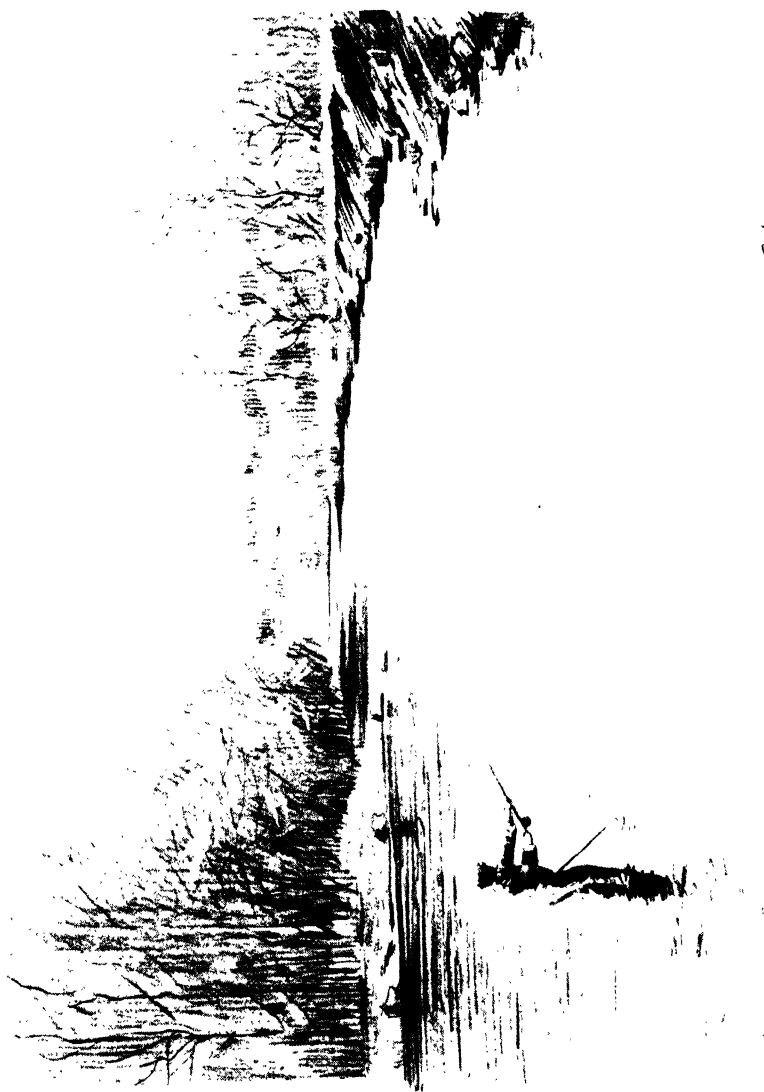
“He hath strange places cramm’d  
With observation, the which he vents  
In mangled forms.”

“As You Like It,” Act II, Scene vii.

THERE was at one period which I can remember great talk about ‘auras.’ Those sufficiently gifted were in a position to recognise the character of persons they encountered by the colour of the aura surrounding them. The tinge encircling the very best people was golden, ranging through yellow, blue, pink and red to more sombre colours. Convenient as it might be if such were visible to less highly endowed individuals, life would undoubtedly become more complicated and difficult, not to say dangerous, and the blending of auras a matter of grave concern to a hostess. A highly respectable individual’s aura might suddenly become blurred or even change violently from, say, gold to purple on meeting a stronger one, and domestic life become impossible. Mine, I fear, would be but a very dingy affair, burnt umber or some similar shade. I can imagine such remarks as “How can you be friends with that dreadful person? Just look at her aura!” But although the ordinary mortal is, mercifully, unable to detect such phenomena with the naked eye, he is at times aware of the atmosphere surrounding certain people. We instinctively take to a person, or even dislike him, at first sight. Such warnings should not be disregarded, as I have learned to my cost. Some we are fortunate enough to know bear with them wherever they go, and this applies particularly, I think, to those who are really good in the old-fashioned sense of the word, an atmosphere which makes those whom they chance to meet glad that they are there, glad to be with them and sorry when they have gone. The world seems a brighter and a better place for their presence, and we, not quite so unworthy to take our part in it. Often, it seems to me, such

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SEEK IN SPRING, ALBERTA, CANADA





bright spirits are unconscious of their own worth. They see and produce the best in everyone they meet.

Only once was I conscious of an opposite effect in a total stranger. It happened years ago, but so great was the impression made on me at the time that I can even remember the exact spot where it took place. I was walking up Piccadilly, and just opposite to what is now the R.A.F. Club I noticed a man, he would have been about forty, walking towards me. He looked quite ordinary, not well dressed, not shabby. As we drew closer I met his glance, and if ever evil looked out of a man's face it did from his. It was not an expression that could be labelled. It was not temper, sullenness, peevishness, nor any minor quality; it was sheer unadulterated badness. I never knew who he was; I have never seen him since, but I should like to know his history and the reason why one to whom he was quite unknown should so long afterwards have remembered the encounter.

I love walking in London. I loathe walks for the sake of a walk. In London one's interest is kept constantly on the alert. Who are all the people one meets? Prosperous and seedy, gay and sad, they are full of their own little interests, the most important of which are, in reality, so trivial. Adventure lies at every turn, love, joy, sorrow, romance, prosperity and failure. If you take an accustomed route you get to know certain individuals by sight and speculate the more freely as to their identities. There was the big, serious, intent man with the far-away gaze, in the bow tie and sponge-bag trousers, surprisingly topped by a brown tweed coat and bowler hat. There was the tubby little fellow who looked like Mr. Pickwick. There was the whiskered gentleman in the up-and-down collar, when up-and-down collars were rare, who minced along with his short-sighted gaze, his top-hat, morning-coat and gold-headed cane. There was the rosy-faced peer with his eternal toothpick sticking out of the corner of his mouth. There was the thin, shaven club man in his preposterous brown hat and obvious wig. I knew so many of them by sight and some by name.

The most extraordinary encounter I ever had came about in the following manner. I was staying with Brock

in Derbyshire and we had been over to shoot grouse with his brother Phil at Swythamley. It is a delightful little moor, and the Derbyshire grouse every whit as sporting as those in Scotland. After dinner Brock suddenly said, "Have you heard of the mysterious black motor-car that is going about London?"

I asked for the story.

"You may meet it anywhere in the West End. It is driven by a girl and there is another beside her. If you are alone, the car, cruising quietly along one of the streets off Piccadilly, will stop and one of the girls will say, 'Could you give me a match?' If you are sufficiently bold to answer in the affirmative she will light a cigarette, thank you and add, 'What about coming home for a drink?'" I may add, at this point, that I never actually met anyone who had accepted this invitation; only those who knew someone who had a friend who had done so. It was rather like the stories about the Russians in the First World War. One never met anyone who had actually seen them, but a friend of someone's knew the guard who had seen them kicking the snow off their boots when getting into the train. No one ever knew where the snow originated.

"Well," went on Brock, "this happened to several people. They were all, on separate occasions in the early morning, discovered by a stray passer-by propped against some doorway in a lonely part of London, in a state of unconsciousness. On their recovery all were found to have undergone an operation which certainly did not leave them in a normal condition. Their stories were similar; that, having entered the car, they almost at once passed out. Their recollection ended. One explanation is that the girl, or her sister, has suffered at the hands of one of the opposite sex and that this treatment of other men is undertaken by way of revenge. There are others. The operation appears, in every case, to have been performed with great skill by an experienced surgeon. That is all that is known; but I believe it is a fact that young officers on leave in London have been warned to be extremely careful about accepting lifts from unknown ladies."

Now for the sequel. The following morning I left for London. That night, about ten o'clock, I was walking

back to my club, where I was staying, when, coming slowly down Albemarle street, I noticed a black car. The story had gone out of my mind, but at this it suddenly returned. Drawing level, the car pulled in to the kerb and a woman's voice said, "Have you a match?" This, coming so pat on my recollection, gave me something of a shock. Hastily removing myself to the far side of the pavement, I gave an emphatic negative. I looked back and saw two dim female forms in the front seat. I also, as the car turned into Piccadilly, took its number.

Looking nervously, more than once, over my shoulder, I reached my club, sat down and wrote a full account of my adventure to Brock. The next day I received a telegram, "Glad you got back intact. Hope you had a good night."

Brock came up to London shortly afterwards and I gave him all the details. He, being a man of action, went to Scotland Yard and demanded an interview with one of the Big Four. Given an audience with one of the lesser minions of the law he told his story, enquiring on its conclusion if the latter had any previous knowledge of the black car.

"Never 'eard of such a thing" was all the satisfaction he could get, and the black car vanishes into the secret depths of the great city, mysterious and unidentified to the end.

But it gave me something to think about!

Mention of Scotland Yard reminds me of the days before I was called to the Bar and attended many trials. I never practised, though I used to enjoy listening to the great advocates and watching the spectacle of human nature under the microscope. Truly there were giants in those days. Lord Alverstone, enthroned on high in his red robes, looked, indeed the personification of the Lord Chief Justice; Sir Edward Carson, with his rich Irish brogue, which, it struck me, he emphasised with great effect at times, was another striking figure. I recall particularly one case (*Cole v. Ellis*), dealing with a collection of china believed to be of great value, but much of it, in reality, spurious. Two of the pieces represented pug dogs, and I can still hear Sir Edward, looking majestically round the court,



asking with a terrific accent, "Wh-ere are the p-hug dogs?"

Sir Rufus Isaacs, later Lord Reading, whose career was so romantic and spectacular, was often opposed to him (though in the case just mentioned he was actually led by Sir Edward for the first and only time), and their verbal battles were a source of great entertainment to all those who had the privilege of being present. Sir Rufus had the most delightful and charming smile of any that I have ever seen.

Lord Birkenhead was a terror as a cross-examiner, and quite merciless. In his wig and gown he looked an absolute boy, and it was not easy to realise that he was one of the greatest lawyers the English Bar has ever produced. I went into court one day when he was in process of cross-examining a perfectly innocent witness, a rather florid, prosperous-looking butcher. By the end of the cross-examination, though he was guiltless of anything save in being so unfortunate as to have been called as a witness, his air of floridity and prosperity had completely evaporated and he looked like a piece of chewed string.

It was of this great man that the story was told of the judge who, growing somewhat restive under Mr. Smith's remarks, could bear it no longer and remarked, "You are being extremely offensive, young man."

"As a matter of fact we both are, m'lud," returned the latter, "but I am trying to be and you can't help it."

The Prime Minister in "Great Contemporaries" gives a full account of the incident.

Mr. Justice Darling could always be relied on for some brilliant and witty remarks, even though, at times, such might seem out of place.

Sir Edward Marshall Hall, tall and good-looking, had the most amazing vocabulary and never hesitated or seemed at a loss for the right word, a characteristic shared by Lord Leconfield. He was at his best during criminal cases, in which he specialised. I believe he always said that he could have saved Crippen. The affinities between Bar and stage are very close, and Marshall Hall might have been a great actor.

Bottomley I saw once. He conducted his own case

against Sir John Simon (now Lord Simon), and a very good job he made of it. Had his lines run in different places there is little doubt that he would have made a great name for himself as a lawyer. He had the most cold and merciless blue eye I have ever seen in a human head. One of the best stories about Bottomley (I have never seen it in print\*) was told of an occasion after he had been convicted. An acquaintance of his, being shown round the prison where he was confined, and coming to his cell, noticed that Bottomley was making mail-bags, which, I believe, is one of the customary tasks allotted. Not wishing to cut his former acquaintance, and rather at a loss for a remark, the visitor blurted out, "Ah! sewing, I see." Without a second's hesitation Bottomley looked up and replied, "No, reaping." He ought to have had a year taken off his sentence, for as a flash of impromptu wit I do not think this answer could be eclipsed.

Another brilliant remark was attributed to Lady Tree. Watching a very thin woman very scantily clothed at a dance, she remarked, "That woman reminds me of a bad photograph." Someone bought it. "Under-developed and over-exposed," said Lady Tree.

Only once did I attend a murder trial, at the new Old Bailey. Such must always be a terrible and moving experience. If anyone is dissatisfied with his lot, or thinks he is hardly used, I advise him to go to one. He will then realise what it is to be free; free to enjoy the sun, the air, the delights of human companionship and the sight of green trees and fields. What most strikes an observer is the deadly, inevitable, unhurried, matter-of-fact, relentless procedure of the whole business. Inevitably you feel pity for the poor wretch in the dock, the whole impartial majesty of the Law ranged against him; but too often, at the sight of him there alone between warders, his victim is forgotten.

The trial which I attended took place on March 15th, 1909. The facts were as follows:

A man named Sproule, the second engineer of a ship, whose name I forget, accompanied by the second mate,

\* I apologise! Mr. Theodore Felstead gives this story in his entertaining "Life of Horatio Bottomley."

McEachern, came on shore when their ship entered the Port of London, and dined in Aldgate.

After dinner they visited several bars, and in one of them, about midnight, met two women. With them they returned to where the latter were living and settled down to a carouse with a bottle of whisky. While thus engaged there entered two brothers called Reubens, Jews, one armed with a rhinoceros-hide whip, who accused them of attacking the virtue of their innocent wives: the old story.

Both seamen, drunk and more or less helpless, were attacked by the two brothers, McEachern, very battered, staggered out of the house and eventually found a policeman. He gasped out his story and, accompanied by the policeman, endeavoured to identify the building in which he had been attacked. This he was unable at first to do; not, in fact, until they came on his companion's dead body lying in the road. He had been stabbed, it was eventually discovered, with an eighteen-penny knife! Chief Inspector Wensley arrived on the scene about 2.45.

In the moonlight, for it was a bright night, he found a trail of blood leading to a doorway, with, imprinted on it, the bloodstained mark of a human hand. The door itself was produced in court.

The police entered the house, and in the darkness heard the sound of a man's hard breathing. Him they arrested. This was Mark Reubens. Morris, his brother, was discovered, terror-stricken, under a bed. He also was arrested and Sproule's watch and chain were found on him.

"If he was stabbed, it must have been my brother," said he.

This was a most damaging remark, as appeared at the trial, for up till then no mention had been made of anyone having been stabbed.

The two brothers were not married, but lived as parasites on the two women. They had knocked softly on the shutters of the room in which the latter had been drinking with the seamen, and been quietly admitted. The knife with which Mark had stabbed Sproule was found behind a stove.

Mr. Justice Jelf presided at the trial which followed; his first on a murder charge. Sproule, it was shown, had

put up a great fight for his life, being covered with cuts and stabs. He had finally been killed by a blow in the chest.

The jury, after an absence of twelve minutes, found both the prisoners guilty. They were condemned to death and duly hanged in the following May.

The most moving incidents in the trial occurred when the two women, one in particular, were giving their evidence. Surprising as it may seem, this particular girl had an air almost of refinement about her, and her evidence, as the judge, who was much moved, in his summing up remarked, "was enough to make angels weep."

The demeanour of the two prisoners was in striking contrast. Mark, with his sullen, low brow and brutal expression, looked and behaved like some cornered animal. Morris, a slightly built, pale, under-nourished specimen, had the appearance of a seedy clerk. He, first, was ordered to hear sentence pronounced. When the foreman of the jury pronounced the fatal word "Guilty" he flung out his left arm in a dramatic gesture and called out, "Is there no hope of mercy, gentlemen?" but took his sentence bravely.

Mark, on the other hand, crooked his arm over his face and gave vent to a series of loud, bestial, animal noises.

Morris, already sentenced, turned to him, flung his arm round him and said, "Be a man, Markie!"

Low, sordid and horrible as his crime was, it was impossible to suppress a feeling of sympathy with the wretched creature. Mark flung himself all over the dock as Mr. Justice Jelf's voice, in broken utterances, sounded through the court. Additional warders rushed up and the two condemned criminals were hustled out of the dock, the sound of their shouts and cries gradually becoming fainter as they were taken, still struggling, to their doom.

I was never so thankful in my life to be once again in the open streets, with their thronging traffic, bustling crowds and the ordinary, simple, everyday facts of life surrounding me.

The law of Scotland provides an alternative to the verdicts of 'Guilty' and 'Not Guilty.' The jury, if not satisfied with the evidence, may bring in a verdict of 'Not proven'; nor, I believe, can the accused persons

once this verdict has been pronounced, again suffer trial on the same charge. After the recent Scottish trial of a young boy charged with murdering a girl which ended thus, one of the spectators cynically remarked that in effect such a verdict amounted to saying, "We know you did it, but don't do it again." Another said that such a verdict was all wrong, and that he for one would not care to go through life knowing that he was free on grounds so equivocal. Personally this seemed to me preferable to being hanged by the neck until I was dead! One can never tell what share the victim had in such tragedies.

British justice is, I think, unequalled in its operations. Crimes are usually punished within a reasonable time, and it is impossible here to visualise the workings of the law as carried out in, say, the United States. I landed in New York in 1906 the day after a 'play-boy' called Thaw had shot a well-known architect and man-about-town (whatever that means), Stanford White, on, I think, the Metropolitan Roof Garden of New York. Plenty of spectators saw the murder, but it was nearly two years before a jury delivered its verdict. Thaw's wife, Evelyn, came in for a good deal of publicity in Europe in later years.

Some people want murdering, but it is not always the right ones whom that unhappy fate befalls! I always felt sorry for Crippen who, whatever his faults, was a brave little man, genuinely in love with Le Neve and thinking only of her after his arrest. If ever there was a tiresome woman I should think it must have been the wretched Belle Ellmore, and in any case it is very doubtful if Crippen really intended to murder her.

One of the most fatal and surprising habits embedded in human nature is the practice of retaining letters of a compromising character. Many have subsequently regretted this weakness, particularly, I was going to write, women. It is the other way round in reality, for it is often men who keep letters from the opposite sex with results which end disastrously. In the famous case of 'Thompson and Bywaters' it was Mrs. Thompson's letters retained by Bywaters which did much to bring her to the scaffold. That she, again, desired so drastic a liquidation of Mr. Thompson, who must have been an awful bore, is very

much open to discussion, in spite of excursions into the realm of fantasy in her correspondence.

I have never, so far as I am aware, actually encountered a murderer, though it is not, of course, a distinction much advertised. I certainly would not have put it past the gentleman I met in Piccadilly!

At a reception in Berlin a German said to me, "Would you like to meet a man who has killed a great number of Englishmen?" The question I considered in very bad taste and declined. The man he pointed out was General Udet, one of the air aces of both this war and the last, who was killed, so it was announced, testing a new type of aircraft in November 1941. A chivalrous opponent, he was liked by his adversaries better than von Richthofen, to the command of whose 'circus' he succeeded when the latter was killed.

An Englishman was shot down by von Richthofen, himself badly wounded. He was taken to a German hospital. When convalescent his nurse came to him one day and said, "You are to have a great honour. The Baron von Richthofen is coming to see you."

The airman duly came, and was quite pleasant though slightly pompous. As he was leaving he said, "I will send you fruit and flowers."

"Thanks very much," said the Englishman. "The first will be most welcome, but I hope the flowers won't be required."

Talk of deaths naturally leads to the question of ghosts. I have never seen a ghost, though I have stayed in houses reputed to be haunted. In one house in Warwickshire I never passed a certain place on the stairs, which, I may add, had not been pointed out to me, without feeling acutely uncomfortable. The reason for this I never discovered.

In this same house I slept in a room called 'The Priest's Room,' in an enormous canopied four-post bed with hangings. There was a secret chamber over the fireplace, with a hole in the panelling which enabled an observer to scrutinise the occupant of the apartment below, unseen. I spent an acutely uncomfortable night, which may perhaps have been due to the stuffiness caused by the hangings

of the bed, but nothing untoward materialised. Whenever I did wake up I instinctively looked towards the fireplace, expecting to meet the sinister gaze of an eye peering through the hole.

I once had an idea for a ghost story which I never was able to work out to a finish. It was this.

A traveller arrives at a not too high-class country hotel and is shown up to his bedroom. Everything appears quite normal. The room has a door in the angle of the right-hand wall. Opposite this is a window, and between them the bed with the ordinary black, old-fashioned iron frame. Opposite the end of the bed is the fireplace. A luggage stand is placed before it. On the right of the fireplace is a washstand, on the left a chest of drawers. Over the fireplace is a large, mottled, ancient mirror extending up to the ceiling. The traveller starts unpacking beneath the mirror, placing the articles he removes in the chest of drawers. Whilst so doing his glance rests on the mirror, and in the reflection he notices that the door is slightly open. This strikes him as rather strange, as he has heard nothing and indeed remembers shutting it after his luggage had been deposited. He thinks no more about it but goes on unpacking. Glancing into the mirror a few moments later, he sees that the door is open, wider indeed than before, and that through the opening a head protrudes, a thin, vindictive, close-cropped head, with reddish hair. Two narrow red-rimmed eyes of a greenish tint are regarding him malevolently, and the straight, thin-lipped mouth is drawn up slightly at the left. The appearance of the face reminds him of pictures of Uriah Heep. Turning hastily round to confront the intruder, he sees that the door is shut and that no face is there.

Rather confusedly he returns to his unpacking, only to find on again looking in the mirror that the door is wide open and that the intruder is well inside the room, half hidden by the foot of the bed. He can, however, detect that he is dressed not in modern clothes but in black breeches and a tail-coat with some kind of a muffler round his neck. The malevolence of his look appears to have increased. His right arm is hidden behind his back. Swiftly turning again, the traveller sees nothing in the

room, which appears quite normal, the door still properly closed. He goes to the door and opens it, to find an empty passage. Closing it behind him, he resumes his unpacking, very much puzzled.

He cannot, however, keep his eyes from the mirror, and on looking into it again is startled to find the invisible stranger standing close beside him, his expression of malevolence intensified and heightened by a look of sinister triumph. His right arm is slowly appearing from behind his back. On the traveller turning swiftly, the room appears still to be empty, drab and normal.

What should be the sequel?

I know only of two ghostly, stalking stories. Lord Elphinstone told me that once his father was riding back after a day's stalking through a lonely glen in Angus. He was not a particularly imaginative man, and, tired and wet, his thoughts dwelt longingly on a good dinner with, possibly, a bottle of champagne. From these he was roused by his pony's sudden halt at a wide burn which barred his path. There seemed no adequate reason for its refusal. The water was not deep and its rider urged it forward. Planting its forefeet firmly, it evinced signs of uneasiness and resolutely refused to move. Thus they stayed, the pony stubborn and its rider impatient. There was no sound except the evening breeze sighing through the birches and the ripple of the water. Then a movement on the opposite bank attracted the rider's attention. Something was stirring, and as he watched from out of the dusk, quite noiselessly crossing the ford came a procession of stags. They filed past him, alert and unafraid, whilst, spellbound, he watched their passing. With their disappearance his pony resumed normality and the path. He reached home without any further incident, and later recounted the adventure to his host. Then the latter told him that a legend existed alleging that any stag shot in that particular glen was believed to join a ghostly and ever-swelling company which at times manifested itself to mortal eyes.

The only other incident of a similar nature in connection with stalking was told me by a Scots friend whom, again, I should not have described as unduly imaginative. He



was one hot day in August wandering about the hills of Jura. There is a depression below the Paps in which large rocks have, in the course of ages, formed a kind of shelter. To these he came, and wearied by his walk lay in the shade resting. He must have dozed, for next he recollected a slight clicking sound as of a hoof striking a stone. He opened his eyes and there came into view a lordly stag with a head of ten points, making down the glen. It stopped for a moment when level, and with one foreleg raised regarded the intruder. Then it continued on its way. Rather puzzled, for a lonely stag at such a season is not usual, he wondered at the absence of other deer. Then another sound followed, this time resembling more a scuffle. Hard on the track of the deer came a hound, a grey, big-limbed hunting dog, nose down following the trail. Behind this again a third figure, a man. He wore a kind of coarse shirt falling to his knees, about his middle a belt, holding a knife. Bearded and shaggy, he held several arrows in his right hand; in his left a bow. Thus they passed, that strange procession, and left the watcher wondering.

The house containing the Priest's Room, in which I stayed, was, as I have said, in Warwickshire. There is another old house, Scottish this time, not far from the Borders. Here on many occasions I have enjoyed the friendship and hospitality of its owners. In these days when, owing to difficulties of transport, food rationing, and general upheaval, the advent of guests is as rare as that of tigers in the Arctic regions, I look back on these visits with affection and envy. In this house, it is very old, there is a room at the head of a flight of stairs from which, at times, issue the strains of a harp where no music should be. It is said to be an ancestress bewailing the misery and loneliness she endured many years before. I have never, I am glad to say, heard her plaintive moans, though I always pass the head of the stairs with an anxious ear cocked in the direction of her door.

One evening after dinner we were amusing ourselves with automatic pencil writing. One of the family asked if he, who had never done so, might be privileged to hear this ghostly music.

"Yes, if you come alone," wrote the pencil.

This was rather unpleasantly succinct.

"Might I bring someone with me?" asked the would-be enquirer into psychic matters.

"No," wrote the pencil, keeping up its reputation for terseness.

The student, nor could I blame him, decided not to invade the lady's solitude.

My friends, amongst other things, are gifted with the faculty, though this has nothing to do with the ghostly music, of being able to write not only as legibly (they all have the most delightful handwriting) and quickly with their left hands as with their right, but two of them, at any rate, can with equal ease write backwards. Held up to a looking-glass, this writing appears as straightforward and easily discernible as their customary script.

Amongst their other accomplishments is what I suppose should be called automatic pencil writing to which I have already alluded. One member of the family holds a pencil in the ordinary way point downwards. It must be a long one but is otherwise perfectly ordinary. Another holds the top lightly between his or her fingers and thumb. Questions are then asked and, sometimes, answers are given (when I held the pencil it remained quite motionless), many of them most surprising. My host told me that the most remarkable incident in this connection occurred on an occasion when I was not present. His house, as I have said, is very old. Indeed, the tower dates back to the sixteenth century. One evening when his family were using the pencil one of them said, "Ask who built the tower," which they all supposed represented an energetic spasm on the part of one of their ancestors.

Without the slightest pause came the answer pat: "Hugh Rigg." And this Hugh Rigg it was indeed who built the tower about 1541. Of him the players had never even heard. Such occurrences are not easy of explanation.

There is at the Royal Palace of Holyroodhouse a very beautiful little death-mask reputed to be that of Mary Queen of Scots. It is owned by the Duke of Hamilton, the Hereditary Keeper of the Palace, and bears a marked resemblance to the face of the effigy on the Queen's tomb

in Westminster Abbey. Now, there is a good deal of discussion as to whether it really does represent Queen Mary, and we had been talking about it during dinner on the night when I first witnessed automatic writing. Just before the start, one of the sons, John I will call him, said, "Let's ask about the death-mask."

Preparations were made, and John said, "Can we please get in touch with Queen Mary of Scotland?" After a little he added, "We should like to know, Your Majesty, if the death-mask at Holyrood is really of you."

The pencil began swiftly to write and without the slightest hesitation. "No," it set down, in French, "one of my maids."

"Which one?" asked John.

I wished afterwards that I had kept the papers or made some notes, but I did not and have only my memory to rely on. I am practically certain, however, that the answer was "Mary Seton." She, of course, was one of the Queen's famous 'Four Marys.'

This particular conversation, if so it may be called, impressed me very much, possibly, in part, because it was the first time I had ever seen automatic writing, but also because there was no reason for, nor suggestion of, collusion; there was not the slightest hesitation in the answers, and the latter, when one came to reason them out, were, on the face of them, couched in such terms as might have been anticipated, unexpected though the first answer was.

The final question put to that ill-fated and tragic lady was, "What were your last words?"

"In manus tuas, Domine," wrote the pencil.

"Is that right?" someone asked. We looked it up and it was. Actually no one present could have answered the question correctly on the spur of the moment. I think we all felt a little, not guilty, but slightly uncomfortable, as though we had touched inadvertently the fringe of matters rather too deep for fooling.

On another occasion the atmosphere was more frivolous, and Prince Charles Edward, wrote the pencil, considered Cumberland "a cruel and bloodthirsty man" and Lord George Murray "very difficult." Napoleon stigmatised Hudson Lowe as "un gros cochon."

One of Queen Mary's chief enemies was her half-brother the Regent Moray. He was shot in Linlithgow by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, whose wife he had turned into the streets on a snowy winter's night after burning her home. Not so very long ago some workmen, when doing repairs to St. Giles' Church in Edinburgh, unearthed his body. The skull came into the possession of the father of Mr. Patrick Buchan-Hepburn, M.P., and the latter gave the skull, or what remained of it, to the late Lord Moray. He had it mounted in silver and it is now at Darnaway, the syllables of which lovely name fall on the ear like those of an old song. Here hangs a contemporary portrait of the Regent by a French artist. It is not an attractive face. Lord Moray once told me that, dining with the Duke of Abercorn, who is related to the Hamiltons, the latter remarked that he thought it must be the first time for several hundred years that two representatives of their respective houses had ever dined together under the roof of either.

Another enemy of Mary's—she had few enough friends—was the Earl of Morton. A curious incident befell me with regard to the latter. I was dining with some friends and the conversation turned on Scottish history. I was engaged at the time in writing "A Stuart Sketch Book." One of the party, whose name I cannot now recall, remarked, "I am one of the few people now alive who has seen Morton." As Morton was executed in 1581 and the speaker was in his thirties, this seemed to need explanation. He gave it. His father, who held some official position, was present with my informant when, for some reason or other, Morton's coffin was exhumed. When the lid was removed the features and the bushy red beard and moustache were in perfect preservation, and those present saw him for a brief space as he must have appeared to his contemporaries. After a short exposure the body crumbled into dust. His descendant, the present Lord Morton, owns Conaglen in Argyllshire, close to the western end of the Caledonian Canal.

At the eastern end, and stretching half-way across Scotland, for its length is exceeded by only one other Scottish loch, Loch Lomond, lies Loch Ness, within ten miles of

whose waters I am writing these lines. In a chapter dealing with 'Odds and Ends' it seems fitting that the Monster should be included.

I am very frequently asked if I have ever seen the monster. Alas! I have not; but I heard rumours of its existence long before it became a Press stunt or had been given ridiculous and irritating names. I knew people who years ago hinted at the existence of some strange beast but refused to be drawn. Nor was this reluctance unnatural. The monster could not be produced to order, and only ocular demonstration would have satisfied the unbeliever. Certainly, if one imagined the possibility of a monster—one could best visualise it in Loch Ness. For Loch Ness can appear very sinister. It is, as I have said, very long. It is also very deep. Loch Morar, I believe, is the only Scottish loch which has greater depth, and there is only one body of water in Europe which exceeds this. Its shores go straight down into the depths, nearly seven hundred feet, and are undercut with jagged rocks. The bottom stretches flat from one end to the other, and in these depths lurk giant eels and horrid eyeless phantoms. I know of two occasions on which divers have plied their trade in these waters, and few wish to experiment a second time. The water is very black, and thirty feet below the surface darkness envelops the searcher and he gropes, unseeing, in a grim, uncanny, subaqueous world. I know more than half a dozen persons who have seen the monster, several confirmed sceptics, and have no doubt that it exists. To what order it belongs I have no idea. It is certainly not any species of seal. It may, according to one theory, have been compelled to show itself in the light of day owing to the disturbance due to the blasting out of the new road which now runs beside Loch Ness. That it came from the sea I cannot believe; for if so, by that route could it return. That it is thirty feet long, or thereabouts, with a mane, a scaly, toad-like skin, and large eyes seems clear. It may have a companion.

Since writing this, a Mr. Robert Neish has published a letter in the Press giving a most circumstantial account of an occasion in July 1934 when he and his family saw two monsters "break the surface of the loch." Their necks

only were visible, but they remained in sight for twenty minutes and appeared to chase each other about.

That one or the other leaps across the road, landing dubiously and at night, bearing in its jaws a sheep or deer, is too fantastic for credence. If such had been its diet, traces of its passage would have been detected long before. That it was reported to have been seen so doing was a stupid tale invented on the spur of the moment. The exact spot was described. I was there within a few hours, and that so vast a beast could have performed such a feat and left no marks of its passage is as ridiculous as to suppose that cattle could walk along a muddy road and leave no traces. For no traces were visible. Not a broken twig, not a misplaced stone, not a footprint, not a bank crushed to show where the creature had moved.

That such strange beasts are not figments of the modern mind one may gather from old records. In his "Memoirs of an ex-Minister" Lord Malmesbury wrote over a hundred years ago that one, John Stuart, a stalker at Achnacarry, on two occasions on bright summer days saw "the lake-horse of Loch Arkaig." Other Highland lochs give credit to similar appearances, and there are legends and stories which bear out such apparitions. Curiously enough not more than one is ever supposed to be in existence at the same time.

The monster usually has been seen at the Fort Augustus end of the loch, and between Urquhart Bay and its eastern end lies the road which I have traversed so many hundreds of times during the past fifty years. Perhaps some day the monster will come wandering in its submerged peregrinations to the black inky waters about Abriachan, and I by chance may see the long humped body rising above the still surface. Then for me, too, another legend will cease to exist.

## X

### *SOME MUSINGS ON SPORT AND FICTION*

"Reading maketh a full man."

FRANCIS BACON, "Of Studies."

**I**N wartime, when these lines are written, one of the chief things learnt is, I suppose, what we can do without. We all have to do without many things to which we are accustomed. We are told that this is very good for us, and things which are good for us are usually very boring. The greatest deprivation is, or would be, to have to do without books. I like having all my own books around me, and not so having them is a real loss.

So great a necessity is reading to the average individual that the fact was even recognised by our rulers, and books were not taxed when almost everything else was. For they are, perhaps, our truest friends. To them we can always turn. With them we can always find solace, comfort and relief.

There are clubs, societies, associations and guilds, presided over by pundits with bulging foreheads and overwhelming prestige, who tell us what we ought to read. I loathe being told what I ought to read. So do many other ordinary people like myself, who want to read what pleases them and what they know they will enjoy. These learned gentlemen, no doubt, benefit some; but there is a tinge of patronage in their advice which is at times a little galling to the plain man. Yet guidance may help, for what a variety there is nowadays from which to choose. How different are the types which the seeker for romance will encounter compared with those which the elderly reader met and loved when he was a boy. They are even a little startling to those whose entry through the magic door took place in the reign of Queen Victoria. Then, the author never "talked obstetrics when the little stranger came." Now, not only is every detail of the little stranger's arrival set down with the particularity of a mathematical



ANTICIPATION





table, but every step which led up to this desirable advent.

The hero of a certain type of 'best seller,' usually a cross between a motor salesman and an amateur pugilist, always, prior to a crisis, drinks incredible quantities of beer and dashes through the night in a high-powered car at a speed never less than about seventy miles an hour, exchanging shots from his automatic with the villain. It is all very exciting and thrilling and a change from the staid old ways, but at times it is just a little too exciting, and one turns with relief to the sound of hooves in the night and the tap of a whip on a shuttered window.

The heroines, too, are different. There is nothing shrinking about the modern heroine. She is hard-boiled, and beyond a pair of 'sheer' (what this implies I am too ignorant to know) stockings and a dress of the filmiest material, under which she appears to wear nothing at all, she is ready for anything which the tough guy whom she secretly loves expects of her. She is, no doubt, a charming and stimulating creature, and yet!— Celia is there at her window, her golden hair shining in the candlelight with outstretched hands and a light in her eyes, just exactly the same, waiting, waiting, as she always will be until you come. So we ride again along the old ways, on the old phantom quests for phantom brides.

It is not always the greatest writers for whom we ordinary people have the greatest affection. Our lesser minds turn the more readily when we seek consolation to those who feel like we do, who can translate our longings into a language which we the most readily understand. We return, those of my generation, to old and tried friends such as Stanley Weyman and Anthony Hope, to Brigadier Gerard and *The Virginian* and the other dream people that we have grown to love so well. "The old flashing figures are alive again," wrote a writer in the "*Times*" when Flavia's creator died, "glowing with the primary colours of simple virtues, vices and emotions. We read on, page after page that should be so antiquated and absurd, and it becomes more and more difficult to put the book down without going on to remind ourselves of the end of this adventure—and the next—and the next. Valour and

loyalty on the grand scale. . . . The swords and the roses and the galloping hooves may seem very far away . . . but that is why the tale of them is a release and an exhilaration. 'The nineteenth-century dislike of romanticism,' said Oscar Wilde, 'is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass.'"

"The Prisoner of Zenda" may not have been, as was said at the time of the author's death, a great book, but it has given greater happiness to many than have many greater, and of the author J. M. Barrie wrote: "He made more people happy than any other author of our time."

That other author, too, whom I have mentioned may never have written a book to which the same epithet may be applied, yet to him I can turn, as I suspect many of my age turn, with never-failing zest. It may in part be due to the joy of old associations, and yet not all. For these are the stories of a born story-teller, and after all it is the story-teller, as many authors nowadays forget, who should write. His, as a rule, elderly heroes bring with them an atmosphere that many of their younger prototypes fail to create. To quote the lines of Robert Louis Stevenson, printed in the preface to the collected edition of Weyman's books:

Whether you come back glad and gay,  
Or come with streaming eyes and hair,  
Here is the gate of the Golden Way.  
Here is the cure for all your care.  
And be your sorrows great or small,  
Here breathe this quantum of romance;  
Be sure you will forget them all  
With this dear Gentleman of France!

So convincing are they, these gallant gentlemen and bewitching heroines, between the covers of a book that they carry us along with them through their travels, not in racing cars but with the clink of hooves; and yet how dismally do such fail upon the screen. I have never yet quite fathomed the reason, though possibly 'glorious Technicolor' may supply an answer.

Stories like these always, when successful, move; and that is what a reader such as I am, asks. Forty pages describing the emotions of the village idiot prior to smacking his old grandmother over the head with an axe; the

musings, which continue for three long chapters, of a lady hoeing a field of turnips who expects to have a baby, bore me to tears, though I suppose some people like such reading and it is, no doubt, high art and may be great literature. In any case, works about the soil, or poems on people being seasick, are to me tedious; though without the former I suppose we should never have had "Cold Comfort Farm" in which to revel.

C. S. Forester, with his immortal "Captain Hornblower, R.N.," is one of the very few modern novelists who can stand comparison with those of an older generation.

Such musings are, however, purely selfish. I did not mean to give my totally unimportant views on reading as a whole, but to attempt a solution on a point which has always exercised my mind with regard to certain aspects of sporting literature.

In my little room I still have all my books connected with deer and stalking, but many others, dealing with various forms of sport, I cannot reach. During this cold, dull afternoon in April, the snow falling relentlessly, I have been browsing amongst those that are here. The first that came to hand was "The Red Deer" in that supremely good series "Fur and Feather." Wrote the late Lochiel: "There are four sports pre-eminent in the British Isles—deer-stalking, salmon-fishing, grouse-shooting and fox-hunting." To "arrive at a fair conclusion of their respective merits" he applies tests. First "the degree of pleasure derived from success." He puts stalking first; as also in the second test he postulates—"the mitigation of disappointment attendant on an unsuccessful day." A third test is "sociability." Here stalking completely fails and fox-hunting is easily first.

I have briefly summarised his remarks, as to-day, when no sport is available, my mind turned inevitably, owing to the weakness of human nature, to the unattainable.

Then, mentally, I began to compare the literature of various sports and to ponder why the literature of the hunting-field, at any rate so far as fiction is concerned, is so incontestably superior to that of any other. This is the point on which I have been meditating. The reason lies,

I think, in the result of Lochiel's final test; that is, sociability.

If you start to analyse, it is the human interest which makes a book enjoyable, whether the peg on which the author's ideas are hung be sport or any other motive. The various aspects of human nature displayed under different conditions; its reactions to different circumstances or characters; the limitless variations of its repercussions, are the factors which arouse the liveliest interest in, at any rate, the adult reader. To read, if the matter under consideration be well presented, can never become boring. Give me a book and I am quite happy. To sit down, as an alternative, to endure the tedium of, say, bridge, evening after evening would to me be purgatory, and an appalling waste of time. Others, and far be it from me to say that they are wrong, regard such an occupation as the height of bliss. Only once did I really enjoy myself in such circumstances. I had dined with a masterful lady whom I had known since childhood. We were eight at dinner, a number which filled me with foreboding. Sure enough, on leaving the festive board and entering the drawing-room my worst fears were realised. There, drawn up, were two of those horrible little tables which are the delight of the bridge fiend, adorned with packs of cards, ash-trays (the only mitigating feature) and oblong pads decorated with mysterious hieroglyphics and lines.

"We'll draw for partners," said the masterful lady.

What could I do? Nothing! I hate the beastly game, but to announce this fact would have, to use the language of modern diplomacy, "upset the whole caboodle." So I said nothing and we drew.

I partnered some unknown female, and felt sorry for her as I knew that she was in for a rotten evening.

"What convention do you play?" she asked brightly.

"I haven't the faintest idea what you are talking about, I'm sorry to say," I replied.

Then we settled down to business, after she had bestowed on me rather a pathetic look. At the end of an evening of, to me, purgatory, I had the satisfaction of taking £1, 2s. 6d. off "she-who-must-be-obeyed." It was hardly worth it!

To return, however, to books.

For many years I thought stags, dreamed stags, and talked stags. I shudder now to think of the hours of acute boredom I must have inflicted on chance acquaintances who failed to share my predilection. Anyhow, it may have been better than bridge!

I have never hunted, but I realise what I have missed. I know nothing of horses nor hounds, yet I can read Surtees with enjoyment, and "The Experiences of an Irish R.M." are to me a never-failing source of delight. Even now, after all these years, can I call to mind with unflinching precision the details of some of the original illustrations which adorned the pages of the old "Badminton Magazine"—alas that it should be no more!—notably one entitled "The Thundercloud Presence of Mr. Tomsy Flood."

Would that stalking, as I knew it when a boy, had produced a Surtees, or a Somerville and Ross, to unfold its delights through characters so sympathetic! There are many good books on stalking. I enumerated some in "Hunting and Stalking the Deer," but, good as they are, there is hardly one which could be expected to appeal to a non-stalker, for they are, almost without exception, works of a more or less technical character. Technicalities, absorbing as they may be to the expert, do not appeal to the layman.

Fishing, too, has but a slender library to make any appeal to the general public. Izaak Walton, it is true, penned an immortal work. There are two classics of which I should hate my bookshelf to be deprived. "Art and Angling in Scotland," by the late Ernest Briggs, owes more to its illustrations than to its text. Nor is this surprising, for Briggs was the greatest watercolour painter of his own particular subjects, chiefly those of running water, whom we have ever produced. "Where the Bright Waters Meet," a charming title, by Plunket Greene, who made his name in other fields, is, I think the most delightful book on fishing ever written. "A Summer on the Test," dealing in the main with the same subject-matter, by John Walter Hills, is also worthy of note. Fishermen, no doubt, could add to the list, but I am no fisherman. I merely like to catch fish, under conditions of my own choice, and

should rightly be scorned by all true disciples of the great Izaak.

Every enthusiast ought to write a book about his favourite topic. I once remarked to the late Alistair Taylor that I thought it was a pity that someone did not write a really good novel about the '45. Alistair looked at me and quietly retorted, "Well, you know, there is 'Waverley'!" I felt duly snubbed, though I still think that John Buchan might have written such a book, which our grandchildren would enjoy.

As I have said, there are many good books on stalking and deer, but few in the form of fiction, and of these certainly none which will sustain comparison with the "Handley Cross" series. Nor do I know of any literature on shooting of any description which would stand such a contrast.

By far the best book of this nature—sporting recollections—is "Autumn Foliage" by Cyril Foley. The title, quite the most brilliant of its kind, alone enough to sell the volume, the author tells us in the preface was evolved by Sir Courtauld Thomson, "who suggested it after precisely one minute's reflection." Would that it were so easy for less gifted people, for to find a good title, though it may sound simple, is extremely difficult. (I should like to add that for that of the present volume I am indebted to my friend Alasdair MacDonald.) Also in the preface it is modestly stated that "this book is nothing but a collection of memories, personal and otherwise, mostly of sport and stories connected therewith. . . . The best that I can hope for is that they may occasionally raise a smile, and if indeed that should prove to be the case I shall feel that after all I have been justified in writing them." The author, in the shades, may rest assured that one reader at least feels that he has more than justified his claims to authorship. I can only advise those who have never been lucky enough to come across this volume, to remedy their failure as quickly as possible. I would forgive one who really made me laugh almost any crime. "Autumn Foliage" is in a class by itself.

Another excellent book of sporting reminiscences is "Edwardian Hey-Days" by George Cornwallis-West. It

contains a delightful account of his first day's stalking when a novice which I cannot forbear from quoting.

He describes how, having met at Invercauld the stalker, one McHardie, they proceeded to the hill, and eventually to a spy. McHardie, having found deer, remarked that it was just a waste of time for the author to inspect them as they were not worth a shot. The latter, however, never having seen deer, was anxious to examine them and insisted on their being pointed out.

"Then began the most extraordinary sort of negative explanation I have ever heard, which went something like this.

"'Ye see yon craggie on the skyline?'

"'Yes,' I said, looking where he pointed.

"'Weel, if ye cast your een doon the side o' the hill ye'll come to a big black crag. If ye look to the west o' that a wee bittie (no self-respecting stalker ever says 'right' or 'left'; he always mentions the points of the compass) ye'll see a green patch.'

"'Yes, yes! I see,' I answered, becoming more and more excited.

"'Weel, they're no' there.' Another pause and a spit; and I felt inclined to say, 'Where the hell are they, then?'"

How often has every 'gentleman' felt inclined to make a similar remark?

The Duke of Portland, too, gives some amusing stories in his various books of reminiscences. Unfortunately, one always feels when reading such memoirs that the best stories have been left out!

In "Edwardian Hey-Days" the author goes on to give reminiscences of Strathconon. 'Squeezer' Combe, as he was known to his friends, was a contemporary of the Duke's, and they each killed their thousandth stag within a short time of one another.

I got to know 'Squeezer' very well towards the latter part of his life. He enjoyed talking about old days and stalking, which he loved almost more than anything else. I did not know him nearly so well when he asked me to stay at Strathconon a good many years ago. He told me to drive myself to the head stalker's house, on the morning



after my arrival, and that I was to stalk on the Big West Hills. I was rather surprised on arriving there to find four ponies. However, we started off, and though I said nothing at first, thinking that some of them would branch off to another beat, they kept steadily on and at last I could bear it no longer and asked Cameron how many stags we were allowed.

"Oh, four," said he. "We have four ponies, and the Captain always sends the number of ponies for stags he wants killed."

To make a long story short, I killed a stag about one o'clock, had my lunch, and later found a number of stags together. These eventually moved on to a piece of ground a few hundred yards long, at the back of which rose a steep wall of rock, the ascent of which was impossible for deer. They therefore had to go to the right or to the left (a stalker, as the author of "*Edwardian Hey-Days*" points out, would have said 'East' or 'West'), and as we were well concealed about the middle of the spot where they were feeding, and within a hundred and fifty yards of them, I had them at my mercy. I killed my stag.

"Tak' yon," hissed Cameron. I took him.

"Tak' yon black beast." I took him too. The second was a royal. The others were good and shootable stags, but nothing special in the way of heads. The average weight of the four was over fifteen stones.

I was rather nervous when returning to the lodge with four stags, and said so to Cameron. He, however, reassured me, and when I encountered my host and told him what I had done, nothing could have been kinder than his reception of my news. He used often to laugh afterwards when I told him of my fears.

Within the last year my old friend has passed to the happy hunting-grounds, his wife is dead, and Strathconon has been burned. It is sad to think of the future of such places. Those with sufficient wealth to indulge their love of stalking are becoming increasingly rare, and when one considers that, as Captain Combe himself once told me, if let for the season for £4000 he still would be out of pocket, the outlook for the owners of such estates is not a cheerful one. Even small deer forests will not readily find tenants.



1841—Feb., 1896



Sept. 5, 1801—Dec. 6, 1886



June 23, 1884—June 23, 1940

THREE GENERATIONS OF FAMOUS SPORTSMEN



For places like Strathconon they will, it seems to me, be non-existent.

In Lady Londonderry's memoirs of her father, Lord Chaplin, there is one chapter on stalking in which are contained some interesting reminiscences of Horatio Ross, the grandfather of my dear friend Hugh whom I have already mentioned. The son of Edward Ross, the first Queen's Prizeman, Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor Lord Cairns, and grandson of Horatio, he was thus third in direct line of this family of famous sportsmen. From them he inherited his good looks, for Edward must have been in this respect remarkable, judging from his photograph. From them, also, Hugh inherited his artistic tastes. The models of ships, tropical fish, and game animals which he fashioned came as a surprise to those who only knew him as a keen soldier. Exhibiting technical knowledge beyond the ordinary, their merits were only equalled by the self-effacing modesty of their creator.

He at one time accompanied a foreign sportsman on a trip to Africa. The latter recorded their experiences on a film. This I was shown. At one point the photographer exclaimed, "Now I will show you my friend, the Scottish major!" From behind a clump of papyrus about a hundred and fifty yards from the camera appeared for about two seconds a head, shaded by a tropical hat. Then it disappeared. That was all that was to be seen of the Scottish major! Over this and attendant anecdotes how many a laugh did I enjoy with the hero of such incidents. Beneath a manner towards strangers rather reserved, he concealed a sense of humour and a whimsical outlook on life which were the delight of his friends.

Hugh was a very keen stalker, a good shot and a fine fisherman. Most of all he loved the hills. Never really recovering from the effects of the last war, it was this that made him, to his great grief, give up the command of his battalion of the Scots Guards. He died after an operation in the summer of 1940.

At his best among a few intimates, his handsome presence will be missed not only in Scotland, ever supreme in his heart, but at meetings of the Shikar Club and at Pratt's, which, lacking him, can never be the same.

Lord Chaplin's mother was named Horatia, after her uncle Horatio, Hugh's grandfather, who was the son of Hercules. The latter was an intimate friend of Nelson's and called his son after him. Horatio was born in 1801 and died in 1886. There are many well-known stories about him. Amongst others, Lord Kennedy made a bet that he would not kill twenty swallows on the wing with a pistol. He did it by shooting just as they were going into their nests at Rossie Castle. He is said to have killed 82 grouse with 82 shots on his eighty-second birthday. Known as "the poacher of the North," as Lady Londonderry writes, he loved to get a stag over his neighbour's march; a taste shared by less distinguished stalkers.

In "Edwardian Hey-Days" the author, in this connection, remarks that there is an element of poaching in the character of every sportsman. Certainly this is true of the majority of sportsmen I have known. I think few would be hard on a poacher who did it from his love of sport, particularly if such activities took place on ground other than that which he owned! I am not speaking of the gangs of roughs who now employ motor-cars for their depredations and even use firearms or bludgeons when interfered with. There is no excuse for such. They poach for profit, but one has a feeling of sympathy for the solitary poacher, who is usually a lover of nature and can gratify his passion in no other way than by trespassing.

Lord Chaplin in his younger days spent much of the autumn at Glenquoich, owned by his great-uncle, Edward Ellice. Lord Henry Bentinck was Lord Chaplin's mentor in stalking, and it was he who advised him to acquire a forest of his own. His first choice in 1863 was Glenfeshie. In 1876 he contemplated Coignafearn, and in 1879 and '80 Ben Hope, in Sutherland, with his brother-in-law, the Marquis of Stafford. He eventually settled at Ben Armine and Loch Choire, and began to build a lodge at the latter place. Those who love reading of old days on the hill will find much for which they will be grateful in Lady Londonderry's book.

It is in such memoirs, and not in volumes actually devoted to sport alone, that one finds the human interest to which I have alluded. To the books which we loved in

our youth we return with renewed pleasure as we grow older.

A great favourite of mine as a boy was entitled "Peter Penniless." I forget the name of the author, as I never actually possessed a copy, but it dealt with the fortunes of a young man who was left without any money, and became a keeper.

Another book I loved, and which I still own, was entitled "A Year of Sport and Natural History," edited by Oswald Crawford. It contained some early drawings of Cecil Aldin, others by Stanley Berkeley and Bryan Hook, who later, when I knew him, painted some excellent pictures, from which coloured prints were made, of East African game. H. A. Bryden and J. E. Harting were among the contributors, and there was a lovely illustration by Frank Teller of a gentleman in a boy's dreadful little cricketing cap taking a shot at a roebuck in a snow-covered field, from behind a conveniently situated bank.

An even earlier love of mine was called "Confessions of a Poacher," edited by John Watson, adorned with some funny old woodcuts by James West. There were verses as chapter headings. I have never forgotten two of them. One ran :

We hear the cry  
Of their voices high,  
Falling dreamily through the sky,  
But their forms we cannot see.

Above was a picture of wild swans flying over a dim loch.  
The other, beneath a picture of two hares, ran :

The merry brown hares came leaping  
Over the crest of the hill,  
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping,  
Under the moonlight still.

"For pleasurable excitement," says the author, "to say nothing of profit, the pick of all poaching is for grouse." He seems to have left it a bit late in the year, "for," he writes, "the bellowing of red deer comes from a neighbouring corrie, and a herd of roe are browsing in the confines of the scrub." There is a delightful picture of two poachers using a silk net supported on poles. This they are en-

deavouring to manœuvre over a number of small birds looking like thrushes and meant for partridges, who are attempting to outwit them.

I know of no great shooting literature dealing with grouse or other game. In "Grouse and Grouse Moors," by Aymer Maxwell, is included a charming little idyll entitled "The 12th August," which appeared originally in the "Scotsman."

All these, however, are entirely different in nature to the "Handley Cross" series and the "Irish R.M.," which are works of fiction based on great technical knowledge and experience of life. In "Wild Sport and Some Stories" the late Gilfred Hartley devotes a chapter to Surtees and expresses his wonder that his books should have survived as they have done. They are certainly not great literature, but unquestionably they are the greatest sporting fiction produced by a British author. As Mr. Hartley points out, they are without plot of any kind. He places, and I agree with his classification, "Handley Cross" first, "Soapey Sponge" second, and "Facey Romford's Hounds" third. "The heroes were either great knaves or fools; the heroines, who play a comparatively subordinate part in the various comedies, are, for the most part, either colourless creatures or no better than they should be. Here is a great picture-gallery to which hardly anyone was admitted who was not a rogue." The characters, in fact, are all frauds, swindlers, liars, drunkards, gamblers, cheats, cowards, braggarts and toadies. And yet the author has the gift of presenting these despicable creatures in such a way that "we learn to look upon the chief characters with affection instead of loathing." Even Jorrocks is "a good for nothing old reprobate," unscrupulous, crafty, addicted to bad language and a philanderer. He drank too much fruity port, was quarrelsome, rude and obnoxious. Yet we forgive him, sympathise with him, and wish him luck. Why? asks Mr. Hartley. Because, he considers, he is a great, real, enthusiastic, plucky and determined sportsman. And so our hearts go out to the old rogue, and his sayings and exploits are cherished by those of our race the world over.

Apropos of this, Lionel Edwards, who has forgotten

more than I and a great many other people ever knew about hunting, wrote to me with regard to Jorrocks. "I quite agree," he says, "that Jorrocks stands at the head of sporting characters for popularity, and has outlasted, in "Handley Cross," most of the classics. Yet, published in 1843, "Handley Cross" was a failure. Why? Probably because Surtees made fun of Masters of Hounds at a time when fox-hunting, socially, was at its height. Most of the Masters were great landed proprietors and the period was one when the tenure of land was in itself of great social as well as monetary value. The reason of Jorrocks' popularity is that he is homely, shrewd, kindly and sincere—all the virtues of the average Englishman. He possesses, also, most of our minor vices. He was, on account of his shrewdness, distinctly careful, if not mean; he was vulgar; he most certainly loved to flirt with every pretty face; he had a huge contempt for foreigners, especially the French; he was in fact the typical Englishman of to-day and yesterday. I believe if you were to ask a non-fox-hunting reader who was the most famous fox-hunter in history, he would name, not Osbaldistone, Tom Smith, Lord Henry Bentinck, Hugo Meynell, or any of the Kings of the Chase, but either John Peel or Mr. Jorrocks! For such is fame!"

The Irish R.M., I think, is held in sympathy and affection by the majority of readers because, in all his mishaps and adventures, we feel that we should have acted and felt in similar circumstances very much as he did. His joy, "my heart was singing like a bird," when the Sultan fails to appear; his sensations on arriving at the wedding party with an Irish dancer's outfit and a broken bottle of whisky in place of the intended salmon; his "prolonged death grapple with sleep" after a colossal meal with Mr. Flynn, and his desperate efforts to make the right sort of answers to his host's half-heard conversation, all strike a responsive chord in our own hearts.

"The Experiences" are better written than are Surtees' books, though they hold no such immortal sentences as Surtees gave us. They contain real feeling too, as in "The White Boys," when old O'Reilly parts with his beloved hounds and his sister hands Flurry Knox the old dinted horn for a 'luck-penny.' "I'm thinking it's fretting after



the hounds he is,' she said, turning her head away to hide the tears in her brown eyes." The author's powers of description, too, are great, and their sense of humour unfailing. Though the original illustrations show talent and spirit, they cannot, of course, compare with those of Leech, to whom Surtees owed so much.

Perhaps some day there will arise an author who will do for shooting or fishing what the authors of "Jorrocks" and the "Irish R.M." have done for lovers of hunting.

## XI

### *SPORT IN ART*

“The joy of art is supremely in the doing of the work itself.”

SIR JOHN MARTIN-HARVEY.

THE portrayal of beasts of the Chase is the oldest form of pictorial art, sprung from man's desire to picture the animals he hunted. In that dim, red dawn the pursuit of large game was the one absorbing occupation, for success meant not only food but clothing. Hence, the appearance of the quarry was impressed very forcibly on the mind of its pursuer. To this fact may be attributed the vivid impressions retained by these early pictures inscribed 20,000 years ago on the walls of caves which were the artists' homes, or incised on the horns of red deer. The Lorthet cylinder, a piece of a stag's antler, discovered by M. Edouard Piette near Louvres in 1873, has been claimed by Sir Ray Lankester as the earliest picture in the world. It well may be. Some of these early pictures are, at times, characterised by a vigour and sincerity not always present in more modern sporting pictures.

We of to-day have many and far other interests, but to return to nature is to know a sense of peace and rest which now more than ever is lacking in modern existence. If he is faithfully to interpret the phases of animal life, the would-be artist must be very close to nature. He must study and observe the downsitting and the uprising of his subjects; he must be constantly on the watch; he must be for ever in the open with a humble and receptive mind, and in the end he may, though his desire will for ever outrun performance, convey to others something of the uplifting and passionate enjoyment which he has himself experienced.

Any sportsman who is in some measure an artist would probably admit, on reflection, that his greatest happiness lay, not in those stalks which had preceded the death of

some fine trophy but in the long happy hours he had spent, unarmed, studying nature and her children. Whatever the emotions the work of such an one arouses in his critics, one thing at least is true. To his own mental vision it recalls the scenes and incidents he has attempted to portray in a fashion more vivid than is conceivable by any other process. And therein lies much of his happiness. We all have our own little picture-galleries in which we can wander at leisure with the companions we love, and live over again some of the many happy hours we have spent in the past. If the artist can recall for others some of their happiest days, he has at least added his mite to the enjoyment of the world at large.

Even the disgust the artist may feel on the disinterment of old sketches is tempered by the lively and pleasing recollections they evoke of the many joys and disappointments experienced while executing them.

In my schoolboy days I formed the habit of carrying pencil, paper and spyglass. They have been my constant companions ever since. What long, and often unnecessary, crawls did those early sketches entail, what careful stalks; what disgust, at times, on the part of the professional who accompanied me, who considered that I ought to pay strict attention to the business in hand and not waste time on non-essentials; and how many quiet, peaceful hours they bring back. The cool fragrance of a leafy birch-wood in the height of summer, watching the herd feed in some open glade (for red deer are really woodland animals, and in those days there were woods in which they could make their home); or, sunk deep in purple heather, the sight of great white galleons sailing aloft in the blue above the sun-kissed hills; peering, a-tremble with excitement, through the tall waving grasses as some big stag rounded up his harem amid the peat-bogs below; or, rarer still, an unseen observer of the pretty love-making of the dainty roebuck and his graceful little doe. But the sporting artist has no easy task, for he must endeavour to satisfy, not the art critic alone but the sportsman, and of the two the latter is the more exacting. He may not detect artistic errors, but any defect on the technical side of the sport with which he is acquainted will call forth outspoken condemnation.

The art critic may rave over a bit of colour ; the sportsman, completely indifferent to this, will complain that the picture does not represent his idea of a grouse drive or a hunting scene, as the case may be. The sportsman will enthusiastically declare that that bird is about as perfect a representation of a grouse as he ever expects to see ; the art critic will talk contemptuously of a 'mere map' and pick to pieces an overloaded foreground.

Photography, though in some respects an aid, has done much to kill illustrative art. The fact that novels are no longer enriched by drawings is to me a loss. Our ideas may not have coincided with the artist's conception of the characters and incidents, but such drawings were at least stimulative and provocative. How much did writers owe to the artist. "Sherlock Holmes," for instance, would not have been the same without the drawings of Sidney Paget. Nor would "Brigadier Gerard," though I have always regretted, in spite of the fact that editions subsequent to the first usually call forth criticisms and regrets, that Lionel Edwards never arranged with a publisher to bring out a new edition, illustrated by himself, of the gallant Frenchman's doings. He would be the ideal person for the job, and what could he not have done with the 'fox chase,' its brilliant uniforms, and the backhander such as that with which our hero killed the aide-de-camp of the Russian Emperor? "The Prisoner of Zenda" never found an artist who, to my ideas, did real justice to Rudolf and his divine Flavia, even though Charles Dana Gibson essayed the task. "The Wind in the Willows" never achieved full success until Ernest Shepperd's drawings fascinated young and old. What did not "Jorrocks" owe to Leech? The list could be multiplied indefinitely, but my concern at the moment is with sporting art.

A book on sport enlivened by drawings holds for me a charm immeasurably superior to any illustrated by photographs. The latter, save in a very limited sense, betray no personality, though they may indicate taste and an eye for effect. Such volumes seldom attempt more than the portrayal of a series of dead beasts in more or less unlovely attitudes and give but little idea of the animals' appearance when alive. A sketch, however indifferent, conveys some-

thing of the atmosphere which inspired it; something of the creator's joy peeps out.

Sketching is, of all gifts, one to be encouraged in the sportsman, and any hard work and time spent on its cultivation more than repays the student. I can at least claim one attribute in common with Dürer! Deer have always been my favourite subject, as they were his. He was, indeed, the first modern artist to draw a stag's head carefully, and was not content to follow in the steps of his predecessors, who were satisfied with an entirely conventional treatment of their antlers.

Joseph Wolf, a German by birth and an Englishman by adoption, was one of the greatest sporting artists of the Victorian or any other era. He could draw any animal or bird, though the two do not always go together. Archibald Thorburn was never so successful with animals, or at any rate the larger ones, as with birds; and George Lodge's hawks and eagles, in particular, are far superior to his animals. Wolf was particularly successful with such subjects as wild sheep, and I remember especially a charcoal drawing of a snow-leopard stalking a herd of Poli rams in the snow which was a masterpiece of action. He possessed extraordinary dexterity in the handling of the texture of fur and hair, as anyone who has seen his pictures of hares, deer, bears, the great cats, chamois, boars and monkeys will realise. His work was not widely known to the general public, but he executed many private commissions. Lord Tweedmouth had some large oil-paintings (9 feet high) of his at Guisachan, showing among other subjects roe, red deer, eagles and ospreys. The Duke of Westminster, too, owns others at Loch More Lodge, including a particularly fine tinted charcoal drawing of "Ptarmigan on Foinaven." There is a beautiful little watercolour of these birds by the artist in the South Kensington Museum. Wolf generally worked on a large scale. Charles Whympers, who illustrated many books on sport, bought a number of Wolf's charcoal sketches after his death, on which he subsequently made a very handsome profit.

Wolf was a very homely man, and though he spent much time in Scotland, gathering material and acquiring a great deal of knowledge, he disliked 'grand visits' as he called

them and grew to rebel against aristocracies in general. One of his favourite dictums was, "We see distinctly only what we know thoroughly." That he knew his chosen subject thoroughly his work reveals.

He illustrated Cotton Oswell's "African Adventures" in the "Badminton Library of Big Game" and said that, owing to the sportsman's vivid descriptions of what he wanted done, as distinct from those of the great explorer Livingstone, he had no difficulty at all in composing these illustrations. Cotton Oswell was not only a great sportsman but a very charming man, and I have always regretted that, although I have had the good fortune to meet the majority of the great hunters of the past fifty years, he was rather before my time.

Of another great hunter, Roualeyn Gordon Cumming, Wolf had decided ideas, and thought that he was not to be compared with Oswell.

Wolf had a sense of the dramatic which he exhibited in his work. Such drawings as "Surprise"—two hares confronted by a scarecrow; "Peace and War"—a turtle-dove sitting above a German helmet; "Age"—an old stag in a snow-covered wood; "Bruin at Bay"; and "At Close Quarters"—a beautiful drawing of a wild boar cornered by hounds beneath a snow-covered tree, exemplify this characteristic.

Wolf's studio, near the Zoological Gardens in London, was afterwards occupied by E. Caldwell, who executed many illustrations for books on sport, particularly those dealing with Africa. P. B. Vanderbyl once took me there and introduced me to him. Thorburn, I think, owed a good deal to Wolf, and Murray Dixon, a young artist whom I knew well and of whom I have written in "A Highland Gathering," much to Thorburn. The little ptarmigan drawing in the South Kensington Museum which I have already mentioned might have been painted by the latter artist. How much do the many books on sport published when I was a boy owe to Thorburn. It is the fashion now to decry him, but no bird artist painted game-birds better than he, though the surroundings of these were not always equally successful.

I remember discussing a picture of his of golden eagles

with another artist. "The birds," said he, "are all right, but why does he put that silly little work basket in the corner?" The 'basket' to which he alluded was intended to represent the eagles' nest, and I can never, whenever I look at this picture, forget his satirical comment. The most common error with painters of sporting subjects of bird life is to make the bird much too large for its surroundings. Either way such an one has a hard time!

Far and away the greatest illustrator of sporting life in our day is my old friend Lionel Edwards. Horses and hunting are, of course, his forte, but he possesses the faculty of being able to put down in line or paint not only what he has once seen but what he has not seen. I am fortunate in possessing a picture by him of the West coast of Scotland, painted before he had ever been there. He might have known it all his life. Similarly, his picture of the Kadir Cup represents that event far more accurately than pictures by less gifted artists who had witnessed it, or photographs.

He, like Wolf, has a sense of the dramatic, as many of his pictures testify, and, in addition, a wonderful eye for colour. An appreciation of colour and a sense of line do not always go together. He possesses both and, also, great technical knowledge about his favourite sport, hunting. The sportsman connoisseur of pictures, whatever else he may forgive, will never pass over a technical error in the depiction of a sport with which he personally is well acquainted. This, in part, explains why Lionel Edwards in pre-war days seldom failed to find purchasers for his work.

Any appreciation of colour, any facility in the use of paint which I have acquired, I owe entirely to Lionel Edwards' teaching, a debt which I can never hope to repay. Some of my happiest days have been spent watching him at work, and when we were occupied together on "A Stuart Sketch Book" and "Hunting and Stalking the Deer." Alas that such days are unlikely to come again! I personally was sorry when he turned his attention to oils, as his oil-paintings have never, in my opinion, equalled the work he did in his own medium of gouache, good though many of them are. The prices to be obtained for oil-paintings are, however, much

greater than those which can be expected for watercolours. Portraits too, and latterly he obtained many commissions for these, usually equestrian, pay much better than illustrative drawings. The latter, notwithstanding, are more amusing to the ordinary laymen, and I miss his clever sketches in the Press, which they for so many years adorned. A Hungarian collector cut out all he could find and had several thousands. "Country Life" and the "Tatler" in the old days used regularly to publish coloured reproductions of his work, to the great delight of their many readers.

Cecil Aldin was another well-known illustrator of sporting events, particularly of hunting, though by far the best series he ever drew dealt with old inns and were executed in pastels, and, for he was essentially a dog-lover, his marvellous impressions of dog life.

G. D. Armour has many sporting drawings to his credit. One of the best I remember was a pencil drawing of otter hounds which appeared many years ago in "Country Life." He too specialises in hunting scenes. The chief characteristic of his pictures is, I think, that he shows the sport in its real setting. There are no theatrical backgrounds. It rains, or snows, or blows a gale; the sportsmen's hats drip, they are covered with mud, the horses labour through the sticky plough, or fall heavily over fences. It is hunting in real English weather, which, in pictures, is not always shown.

Another artist, perhaps the greatest in his own line, though he does not always confine himself to sporting subjects, is A. J. Munnings. His pictures may be criticised for a certain sameness of effect—afternoon sun, long shadows, a slightly theatrical atmosphere, with backgrounds, at times, reminiscent of stage scenery. His riders, too, seem rather to be posing for their portraits, and his horses for the show ring. It is easy for lesser people to criticise, and no one can paint a point-to-point meeting as can he. The casual spectator may not realise how great an artist he really is, looking at his paintings, until he sees a reproduction in black-and-white and compares the tone values.

It is curious, as I have mentioned elsewhere, that we as



a nation have never produced a really first-rate painter of big game; these all seem to be German or Austrian. Carl Rungius,\* the American, who illustrated Theodore Roosevelt's book on Africa and did it very well, is, I imagine, of German extraction. Such art does not seem to appeal to the ordinary public here, though we may claim the best private collections of big game in the world and were certainly the pioneers in this branch of sport.

Mr. Frederic Whiting has noticed this also, for he wrote in an article in the "Field": "It is, in fact, most extraordinary that we as the nation most devoted to field sports have produced so few great painters who have depicted our most outstanding characteristics."

German animal sculpture, at any rate of what may generally be described as 'big game,' is superior to our own. The Tiergarten in Berlin and other parks and private demesnes are adorned by life-size bronze groups of deer, bison, elk and other animals, all of which are accurate, lifelike and imposing. Smaller bronzes, too, were not beneath the notice of these artists. Pallenburg, who enriched Hagenbeck's Zoological Gardens at Hamburg with many fine models, was one of the best known. I possess a small bronze model of a roebuck done by an Austrian artist, Müller, and two by Zehle, which are first class. One is of a roebuck chasing a doe, and the other, presented to me by the "Field," of a stag pursuing a hind. I value them both highly.

Those interested in sporting art had a great opportunity of enlarging their knowledge at the International Hunting Exhibition in Berlin in 1937. One section was entirely devoted to sporting pictures. They are not unworthy of notice.

Bruno Liljefors, the veteran Swedish painter, who died shortly before the present war, obtained the highest award possible and was given the gold medal for the finest work in the Exhibition. Undoubtedly then the greatest living sporting painter, of the twenty paintings and drawings exhibited by him the majority had been done a good many years previously, though there were a few examples of his later work. In the place of honour hung a fine composition of two sea-eagles attacking a Northern Diver (1897); next

\* This is a slip. Philip Goodwin illustrated this particular volume.

to it, a self-portrait of the artist (1935); and on the other side, a picture of a mere lit by evening glow, with a few ducks skimming over the top of the rushes which fringed its edge (1904). Simple in design and beautifully painted, the shimmer on the water made a fine contrast with the oily look of the sea in the centre picture. "*Birkhahnbalze*" (1900), two blackcocks manœuvring for possession of a grey hen, was one of the best of his oil-paintings. A fine panel of eider-ducks sitting on a rock lapped by the sea (1907) hung next to a more recent work (1934), a white hare crossing a snow-field. At a subject like this Liljefors was unrivalled, and snow scenes seem to have had a special attraction for him, as they have for many Continental artists, a fox or a hare often giving the motif.

A picture attractive both in colour and composition showed an elk-hunter about to shoot his quarry, which is being bayed by a hound (1932). The artist also exhibited a number of black-and-white sketches in simple wash and body colour, most of them fairly recent. They showed wonderful technique. "*Der Fuchsjaeger*" in particular was a marvellous piece of work, and the finest black-and-white drawing by a sporting artist I have ever seen. A bearded hunter, turning three-quarters away from the spectator, stands in the foreground, partially hidden by a snow-covered fir. His attention is concentrated on a fox warily approaching across the snow. So wonderful is the drawing that one could actually realise the mental attitude of the man as he waits tensely until the animal has reached the exact spot where he knows it will be within range. A reproduction of the finished picture for which the sketch was made is shown in the recently published monograph on the artist's work. To have seen this little sketch alone was worth a visit to Berlin. Liljefors was, like Wolf, one of the few artists who seemed capable of dealing equally successfully with either birds or mammals.

Of Richard Friese's work it is impossible to speak too highly. The master of Kuhnert, who held several exhibitions in Bond Street in pre-war days, he surpassed his pupil both in variety of subjects, technique and skill. Like Wolf, most of his work was done for private collections, and though most big-game hunters are acquainted with

his pupil's work, few here have ever heard of Friese. The principal picture exhibited by him was a very large canvas of a lion and lioness lying on a hillside watching a caravan below. It has been often reproduced and is shown in the volume dealing with the artist's work. The foreshortening of the lioness and the treatment of the skin and muscles are superb examples of the painter's skill.

Another picture showed a stag, half hidden by wreathing mists, advancing towards a rival roaring in the foreground. A warm sky was in pleasing contrast to the cold, clear landscape. In a picture of elk, a blue expanse of sky was very cleverly broken up by patches of light, which somehow managed to avoid any suggestion of 'spottiness.'

Friese worked on a big scale, and most of his pictures were painted on large canvases. German artists seem to pay particular attention to mastering the difficulties inherent in the correct rendering of the difference in texture and 'lie' of fur and hair, and Friese's mastery was well shown, not only in the lion picture already mentioned, but in another picture of elk, in which the sombre character of the landscape was relieved by touches of autumn colouring in the birches covering the hillside and the gleam of water on a distant lake.

He exhibited, too, a fine picture of a bear, the texture of whose fur was, again, entirely distinct, and in pleasing contrast to blue shadows in the snow-covered wood. Birches against a belt of firs, and colour in a range of snow-covered hills in the background, brought warmth into the composition which was carried into the foreground by the red stems of some dead trees and a few reeds.

Kuhnert was represented by a number of pictures, of which the best was a herd of buffalo in yellow grass, always a favourite subject with the artist. Many of the works shown were merely sketches for larger paintings, a number of which are already familiar to British sportsmen, so I will say no more about them.

Of living German sporting artists, Professor Gerhard Lobenberg is recognised as the most successful. Specialising chiefly in deer, he exhibited an enormous number of paintings which maintained a high standard. Pleasing in colour and natural in composition, he can depict a

roaring stag in a most lifelike manner. Next, generally speaking, to the power which German artists seem to possess of characterising the texture of an animal's coat they have the power of conveying its mental attitude. This quality Lobenberg displayed in many of his works. In particular, I recall the expression of smug satisfaction on the face of an old stag which has managed to secure one hind, and again, the bored indifference of another old stag in the Carpathians returning to the wood after his morning excursion into the open. Lobenberg's pictures, too, are remarkable for an atmosphere of great freshness.

Other artists whose work was worth noting, without going into detail, were Blauensteiner; Erich Dichtl, a strong and vigorous painter; Hans Dressler, whose winter scenes, especially of black game, good in colour, were inclined to be hard; Schebek, very successful in obtaining the liquid appearance of water; Prokopieff, a fine study of a bear in action comes to mind; Eugen Oswald; Karl Olszewski, one of the best German painters of birds, chiefly swans and geese, whose work is known in this country; Lebrecht; Neufeldt; Garbe; Schmidt, who paints polar bears yellow, and not white as our Zoo artists do; Mellstrom; and Roubal, who specialises in reconstructed scenes of extinct animals and does them very well.

To return, however, to our own artists.

One of the best draughtsmen of deer, both red deer and roe—and Wolf always said that the red stag was certainly one of the most difficult of all animals to draw—was Johnnie Millais. Some of his sketches in "British Deer and their Horns" are as good as any attempted. This volume and "A Breath from the Veldt" contain some of his best work. He was not so good a colourist as a draughtsman, which is not uncommon, but in pen-and-ink work he was a master.

Sidney Steel, who painted some of the pictures in the first-named work, never had justice done to him. He had a very fine sense of colour and great artistic capabilities. Extremely modest and retiring, not well-off and suffering from indifferent health, he lacked the energy to force himself on an unappreciative public. I am glad to say that, urged on by my recommendations, he held several one-man

exhibitions in London. At these his work established itself among the sporting public, and they were not without pecuniary advantages to himself. His own world suffered a great loss by his untimely death a few years ago.

The art of fishing has produced more than one artist who has excelled, notably Norman Wilkinson, who is perhaps better known by his pictures of ships and the sea; and Ernest Briggs, to my mind the greatest of all who have essayed this particular form of art. No one has ever painted running water as he did. I remember once talking to Sidney about Briggs, who was a friend of his and whose work the former greatly admired. He was painting a fishing scene, and at the end of the day he asked for criticisms from his fellow-artist.

"You know," said Sidney, "I think you've put in too many little 'scriggles' in the water."

Briggs regarded his sketch with a critical eye.

"I suppose I have," said he, adding wistfully, "but they are such fun to do!"

I once, driving down the Fulham Road, saw in a shop-window a fishing picture. I went in and guilelessly asked if there were any pictures of fishing for sale. The shopkeeper, to my delight, immediately produced out of the window the picture I had seen. I pretended to take not a great deal of interest in it and enquired the price.

"Twelve pounds," said the man. "A lady brought it in yesterday and thinks it's worth a lot more."

"It may be," said I, "but I don't really know that I like it frightfully. I'll give you ten pounds for it."

The salesman said he would make enquiries and see if this offer would be accepted. Torn in two I left the shop, promising to return the next day.

"She won't take a penny less than twelve pounds," said the man.

"Oh! all right. I'll have it," said I, hastily producing that sum in cash and removing my prize on the instant.

Proceeding to a dealer I knew, who specialised in such subjects, I showed him the picture.

"Where did you get this?" he exclaimed.

"What do you think it's worth?" I countered.

"I'll give you fifty guineas for it now," said he, but I refused the offer and still own it.

Entitled "The Tay below Stobhall," this drawing is reproduced in the book I have already mentioned entitled "Art and Angling in Scotland," and though not one of the best examples of Briggs' work, is still noteworthy for the effect obtained of running water and the beautifully painted salmon. The result has been obtained by a judicious mixture of pure watercolour and gouache, a method practised by Archibald Thorburn with good effect and great skill.

Paintings in gouache (chinese white mixed with pure watercolour), frowned on by 'real' artists, have this advantage: reproductions in colour are very much stronger than those made from pure watercolour sketches. It is a much quicker method of painting than is the latter, mistakes can be more easily rectified, and the whole handling of a picture is much nearer to painting in oils than in watercolours.

Peter Scott is now the most popular painter of wildfowl, and has the advantage of knowing his subject thoroughly. He is a very quick worker, and as he is still a young man, we may expect more work from him in the future. The majority of bird artists are content to work on a comparatively small scale. Scott exhibits his enterprise by painting large canvases. One of his chief claims to being called a great artist in his own particular line is the fact that in his pictures he is able to differentiate between the contrasting flights of various species. Slight as these may be, he can detect them. Widgeon, teal, garganeys, curlew and shovellers all have their own characteristics. The artist not only can descry these, but he can show you the differences in his pictures. "He will," as I wrote in an appreciation of his work during an exhibition held in 1936, "have to put in a lot of work to exceed the standard which he has set himself. I believe that he will succeed."

Poor Frank Southgate, who fell dead from heart failure on his way to the trenches in February 1916, was an extraordinarily good painter, in particular of geese, wildfowl and shore birds. He was able to get great 'atmosphere' into his pictures and was a landscape painter before he

took to birds. Had he been spared, he would have become much better known.

Philip Rickman and W. Harrison are also well known as painters of bird life, especially of game-birds.

My old, or perhaps I should say young friend, the Master of Elphinstone, illustrated "Rough Shoot" by Captain Lyn Allen, produced when they were both prisoners of war in Germany after Dunkirk. The majority of his drawings, particularly of duck, are first-class, and it is to be hoped that he will cultivate his talent when the war is over.

Another artist who originally painted pictures of birds, and later took to deer is V. R. Balfour Browne. Achieving great popularity, his watercolours reproduced as prints and book illustrations have given pleasure to many. He was for years tenant of part of the Blackmount, though now, I regret to say, failing health prevents him from taking the hill. A great lover of deer, he is a conscientious artist.

What greater mark can we aim at, we artists, or would-be artists, save to be conscientious and do our best? We may succeed. We may fail; our worst efforts will disgust many; our best may satisfy a few.

"We are always at school," wrote Johnnie Millais, "from the cradle to the grave. If we are good judges and subject to no illusions, there is always so much still to be done and so little time in which to do it. If Methusaleh had been an animal painter he might have been a successful one, but the ordinary life of one man is far too short. He has just learned a bit of his lesson and the Great Reaper steps in and claims him."

The artist, even if he is not a good artist, has much to be thankful for. He has with him, always, an unfailing source of amusement and pleasure. He may even, at times, be able to give pleasure to others. He is also greatly to be pitied if he, like myself, knows and aches to accomplish that which ever urges him on, and realises, his effort made, how woefully short it falls of that by which he was inspired.



A MOVE—GLEN KINGIE





## XII

### *DEER CONTROL*

"To follow up the antlers of the deer."

W. MORRIS, "Life and Death of Jason."

**I**N November 1939 the then Secretary of State for Scotland, Colonel John Colville, appointed me Deer Control Officer for Scotland; a very different thing from being deer controller.

In the early part of the year I had contributed a short series of articles to the "Field," in which I endeavoured to make clear the steps which had led up to the conditions which prevailed in the Highlands. In writing these I had the advice of many. On no one I relied more than the late Brigadier Hon. Evan Baillie, whose lamented death in 1941 dealt a greater blow to his many friends and to the North of Scotland than any for a great number of years. He was universally popular, his sound common sense, experience and singular charm of manner endearing him to all classes. There is no need to recapitulate here the details of these articles. I will merely say this. The legitimate area of ground in Scotland devoted to deer, and for which there is now, even in wartime, no other economic use, is very large.

This legitimate deer area was not cleared of sheep, as is so often asserted, to give the deer a home. When the great sheep-farming boom failed a hundred years or so ago, the only thing which saved Highland proprietors from ruin was the fact that Scottish sport was becoming popular and they discovered to their heartfelt satisfaction that they possessed a gold-mine which was only waiting to be exploited.

Until the last war, sport in Scotland flourished, though there were signs even then that deer-stalking, at any rate, was not so popular as it had been. Those who loved stalking had cause for concern with regard to conditions which showed no signs of improvement. Then came the

war of 1914, which made them very much worse. That there were far too many deer, few in the best position to know the true facts denied. Those Highland proprietors who were hard pressed to make both ends meet and who relied for the most part on the revenue derived from the leasing of their sporting properties for any income, were finding it hard to get tenants. Not many forests, even the better ones, were let on leases of any length, in which alone lies the salvation of a forest. Yearly tenancies at reduced rents were the best that could be hoped for, and these did not always materialise. They are, in any case, the ruin of a deer forest. Good heads were not common, and those there were came as a rule from forests which still remained in their owner's hands or from the few let on lease, where deer were enabled to withstand the severities of a Highland winter with the aid of artificial feeding. For the land given over to deer was not sufficient to sustain the herds, which had increased to a very large extent. Not nearly enough hinds were killed, in fact the number was actually less than was the number of stags. This, of course, was entirely wrong. About 7000 stags and 6000 hinds were killed annually, out of a probable total of between 180,000 and 200,000 deer. In consequence of this increase in their numbers, when pressed for food in the winter and spring large herds descended to the low ground, where they did damage (though not nearly as much as was alleged) to farm lands and low-lying holdings. The damage done came not from the properly run, long-established deer forest but from those low-lying lands adjoining them on which the presence of deer had been encouraged in order to obtain increased rentals. There is, and always will be in Scotland, a very large area of high ground suited only to deer, and not to sheep and cattle, and on which deer alone will maintain themselves. Such was the position.

In the spring of 1939 the Secretary of State intimated that he would be interested in hearing my views. I was accordingly received by him. In spite of the cordiality of his greeting, I must confess that memories of gangster films flitted through my mind as I sat in his room. He was behind a desk in one corner; his parliamentary secretary,

with whom I was glad to have had some previous acquaintanceship, was at another. Mr. (now Sir) Patrick Laird, from the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, was also present. I sat in the middle of the room with a strong light immediately above me, and was acutely conscious of the fact that a stenographer was taking down in shorthand everything I said. I almost believed that someone would shortly tell me "to come clean," to which I should have inevitably responded, "you kan't do this to me," knowing perfectly well that they could. They didn't.

A little later a Bill was presented in the House of Lords by Lord Zetland which proposed to remedy some of the evils involved. It awaited discussion in the Commons, but the outbreak of war prevented its adoption. Some of its provisions were embodied in Defence Regulations.

My particular job as Deer Control Officer was to keep in touch with the various Deer Committees which were set up in each Highland county under the Agricultural Executive Committees and to give what advice I was able.

Badly administered control or over-control are both capable of producing disastrous results. Most forest-owners take great interest in their deer, and do the best they can within the limits prescribed by extremely difficult times. The exceptions are few. No owner can be expected to incur enormously heavy outlay in erecting fences, save where such are an absolute necessity. They thin out deer to the best of their ability, but local conditions may hamper their efforts to a great extent.

Deer on the Continent are, I think, over-controlled. Apart from places like the Carpathians, a natural home of deer, stag-shooting abroad is a very poor affair compared to a day's stalking on the best sort of deer ground in Scotland. Abroad you do not go out to shoot a stag; you go out to shoot the stag which you are told to shoot. The size of its head probably depends on the estimation of your importance in the eyes of your host. In one Continental shoot a book of photographs was kept of the actual deer to be shot. The 'sportsman' looked through the book, consulted a timetable to see when and where Adolf or Heinrich (for they all had names) was due to appear, drove out, and shot his selected victim. Under such condi-

tions romance withers. As against this, the Continental stalker knows every beast on his ground—not only stags, but hinds—and can tell you, off-hand, exactly how many beasts of a certain age there are in any of his herds; which ought to be shot for the best development of the stock, and which should be spared. The aim of every forest-owner should be to have in his forest such a number of deer as can find food sufficient throughout the year to live in good condition. There should be proper proportion between the sexes, with a sufficient number of good stags to support the ardours of the rut without over-exertion. Owing to artificial marches, divided ownership, and the nature of the ground in Scotland, such an ideal is not easy of realisation. That is no reason why it should not be attempted, and co-operation between owners might do much. I am bound to admit that after forty years' experience I think that more acrimony is engendered in connection with stalking disputes than in any other sport with which I am acquainted.

We are a wasteful nation. On the Continent it was possible to go into any restaurant between June or July and February and always on the menu would appear venison, deliciously cooked and at a moderate price. Here, before the war, it was practically non-existent.

Blue hares are another instance of waste. No animal makes better soup, and yet the owner can get nothing for them. They are a drug on the market. The provost of a Northern town, in an endeavour to do his fellow-townsmen a good turn, organised a large hare drive. Two or three hares were distributed to each householder that afternoon—and the next morning all the dustbins in the town were full of blue hares. So much for benevolence.

Those who know deer find it difficult to realise the ignorance which prevails in some quarters. I was asked to provide a certain number of hinds, which were to be sent to a firm of meat-dealers in the South. The gentleman who was collecting the hinds met the dealer to discuss the matter. During the course of conversation the latter asked, "How will these hinds be killed?" The reply was, of course, "They will be shot." The dealer pondered for a moment and then delivered himself of this remark, which

really does take a lot of beating: "I suppose," said he, "that you will use a humane-killer!"

Nor are deer forests, as a rule, well wooded. One critic suggested that if deer-forest owners were unable to meet the very heavy taxes to which they were subjected, they should sell the timber off their ground and thus satisfy the tax-collectors. I am sure that many of them would have been glad to do so if such a course had been possible.

The whole question of deer in wartime falls under three headings: Production, destruction and distribution.

*Production.*—Deer forests are a valuable source of food supply in time of war. Venison, being unrationed, furnishes a very welcome addition to such meat as is available. There is no doubt that, provided transport and labour difficulties could be overcome, more deer could be killed, and this without doing any harm.

*Destruction.*—Under this heading comes most of the area infested by deer which was not, and ought not to be, afforested. The proper deer forest has a large area of ground at a comparatively high altitude unfit for other forms of stock. Such ground, much of it overstocked, was responsible, as I have explained, for an overflow on to adjacent lands. These came, gradually, to hold a stock of deer which remained there. It was from such conditions that arose most of the complaints of alleged damage. These complaints were particularly emphatic in parts of Perthshire. Here there was situated one forest which had originally been fenced. The fence, many years ago, had become ineffective. Deer had wandered freely, and damage certainly had resulted.

*Distribution.*—This, from the practical point of view, was the most difficult problem of all with which to cope owing to the shortage of labour, the calling up of able-bodied stalkers and gillies, and the absence, in many districts, of suitable ponies. It is not every pony, any more than it is every man, who is useful in a deer forest. So many factors impossible to control may frustrate the best-laid plans. A change of wind, mist, rain, a false move, any of these may cause disaster. Even when the stag is in the larder, arrangements have to be made for its disposal. The weather may become very warm, venison will not keep

for ever. Petrol shortage has to be considered. The whole involves the co-ordination of varying factors, any one of which may throw the whole prearranged scheme out of gear.

With many of the deer forests I was already well acquainted, and with their owners and tenants. I understood, I hope, their point of view and sympathised with the difficult position in which they were placed. Much as I love deer, I was convinced that there were far too many, that land overrun by them which could be put to more profitable use should be so converted, and that their numbers should be reduced. The normal kill was, as I have said, about 7000 stags and 6000 hinds. It seemed to me that more stags should be killed, for there were many useless animals which benefited the stock in no way and were only a nuisance. I also considered that the number of hinds killed could be largely increased. These views I put forward to the owners and Deer Committees. The majority of owners and tenants agreed.

In 1939-40, 7130 stags were killed and 10,971 hinds; in 1940-41, 9890 stags and 12,844 hinds; in 1941-42, 6067 stags and 6025 hinds; in 1942-43, 5550 stags and 5586 hinds.\* The figures I have given are those obtained from official returns. Many more deer were, in fact, actually killed by poachers and unauthorised persons.

This increased killing I still consider was the right course to have adopted.

It was the winter of 1940-41 which entirely altered the whole situation. It was the worst for sixty years. The mortality among deer was tremendous and certainly not less than 20,000 perished, probably more, and the mortality from starvation and disease may have equalled if it did not exceed the number which had been killed with the rifle. Nearly all the mature stags perished, an enormous percentage of calves (which will show very markedly in another five or six years) and a large number of hinds, though these suffered less than the stags.

Many letters appeared in the Press stating that too many deer were being killed and that with their disappearance the chances of returning stalkers after the war being able

\* The figures for 1943-44 are : stags 5533, hinds 4322.

to obtain employment would be diminished. The chances of returning stalkers after the war obtaining employment seems to me, in any case, very slight. Owners will be very hard pressed, the likelihood of tenants renting deer forests is negligible. The papers which expressed these views were in many cases those which had pressed for a reduction of deer prior to the war.

Owing to the fact that venison was not rationed it was in great demand, and though the retail prices to the consumer were fixed in the summer of 1941, those to the owners were not so arranged until 1942. In consequence, large firms who had not hitherto been interested in venison came into the market, and prices as high as 1s. 2d. or 1s. 3d. per lb., free on rail, were paid to owners.

Letters again appeared in the Press giving facts entirely unrelated to the real state of affairs. Owners were accused of making 300 per cent. profit and it was announced that many stags had been sold for £7, 10s. per carcase. This may have been so, but the owner's point of view was entirely ignored. The inevitable expenses of an owner would amount, for the six months during which deer can be killed, that is from August to January, to at least £300. He would have to procure labour, a matter of very great difficulty, and ponies. If he were able, on a fairly representative forest, to kill, say, 40 stags and 60 hinds and sell his venison at 9d. to 10d. per lb., which is a fair price and that given at the beginning of the season in 1941, he would have a balance over the expenses incurred in killing. His rates, taxes and other expenses would, in any case, be far in excess of anything he could acquire by the sale of venison, even by disposing of it at a price higher than that which I have mentioned. Where his profit of 300 per cent. comes in it is difficult for anyone acquainted with the real facts to surmise.

Such is the position in 1944. How it will develop is difficult to say.

The future of deer forests is impossible to forecast. Many recommend that they shall be stocked with sheep. I am not a sheep-farmer, but those sheep-farmers with whom I am acquainted are unanimous in telling me that Scotland is "sheep-sick." In any case, the regular deer



forests which can carry a stock of sheep throughout the year, and winter them, is very small.

Dr. Fraser Darling, whose opinion carries great weight, has written: "A return of prosperity can only come from a large increase in cattle stock concomitant with a much more intensive cultivation of the restricted area of arable ground." He adds: "It is an axiom of animal-breeding science in any country that a breed should never be 'improved' beyond the capacity of the environment to maintain the improvement and, of course, we can do little to improve the very high grazings." The high grazings are where, under present conditions, deer should be, and to which so far as is possible they should be confined. Any ground which can usefully and economically be employed for purposes other than deer should be so converted.

I can see no future for deer forests such as existed in the early years of the century. It is very doubtful if there will be any who will be able to afford a home in the South and, at the same time, maintain an estate in Scotland, used solely for purposes of sport. Some may elect to live in Scotland, but in any case their number will not be large.

I have, in another chapter, referred to the future of large Highland estates, though what this may be no one can with any certainty say. The future alone can supply an answer.

Change will affect Scottish land as it will everything else in the post-war period. Good grouse moors and fishings are likely to escape to a greater degree than other properties. Stalking as my generation knew it will suffer greater modifications than any other form of sport.

A short résumé may be permitted in conclusion, and for any redundancies I crave the reader's indulgence, but, regarded from a practical and economical point of view, few who hold the interests of the Highlands at heart will deny the seriousness of the situation.

The growth in value of sport as an asset to the community in the Highlands of Scotland began about the middle of the last century. The English country gentleman began to take his holiday in Scotland instead of abroad. The result was a very considerable influx of money into the Highlands, and by 1880 it became one of the major

industries in the country. Both the resident Scottish landowner and his English shooting tenant possessed intimate knowledge of agriculture and sport, and there was no conflict between the two. The two were, in fact, closely related in that the rents obtained from the English shooting tenant not only assisted the Scottish landowner to put capital into agriculture, but also had the same effect on the crofter and small farmer, who derived a considerable annual revenue in wages during the shooting season.

The above position is clearly reflected in the Press of that period, which showed how much public opinion realised the value of this asset to the Highlands.

Towards the beginning of the present century two new types of shooting tenant came into existence—one the rich American and the other the rich business man. Competition for shootings increased, values went, and for a time it looked as if the prosperity of the Highlands was assured.

It was about this time that the rating and taxation authorities began to reap the reward of the money which was pouring into the Highlands from this industry. The result of this was that not only were all classes in the Highlands benefiting from the wages, rent and trade which were derived from shooting tenants, but every county was deriving a high proportion of its total rates from its sporting assets. The rates for shooting and stalking alone were providing—and continued to do so up to 1939—an average of at least 25 per cent. of the total county rates, and in certain counties the proportion was as high as 50 per cent. and more.

This state of prosperity might have continued but for two things:

1. Neither of the two new classes of tenant knew very much about agriculture and they knew almost equally little about sport.
2. Whereas, in the early days of letting, tenancies extended for a number of years, and the tenant had almost as much interest as the owner in maintaining sporting and agricultural values, the change in the class of tenant—to one who was dependent on the amount of money which his business had brought

in that year, or who was only prepared to rent shootings in a year in which prospects of shootings appeared good—led to short leases or yearly tenancies. A few landowners were in a position to insist on long tenancies, but the majority were in the position where increased taxation and upkeep cost compelled them to let by the year, in order to meet the immediate costs of estate maintenance.

These two factors produced the following position, which may briefly be summarised as under :

- (a) An industry had been built up which was of great value to the community, but the control of the industry was rapidly falling out of the hands of those who had built it up, into the hands of individuals who were using it for their own immediate benefit, and not with any long-term view as to its value to the community, or with any interest in maintaining its capital value.
- (b) Unnecessary friction had arisen between agriculture and forestry on the one hand and sport on the other; whereas, if properly managed, these three industries were closely connected and, to a large extent, interdependent.
- (c) A difficult position had arisen for the rating authorities, for the wage-earners and the landowner, owing to fluctuation of income which had become dependent on a good year in the City, or a year when climatic conditions had been favourable.

Prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 :

- (a) Sport was one of the three major industries in the Highlands, from the point of view of rates and wages.
- (b) Some deterioration in its capital value was beginning to become apparent, owing to yearly tenancies and to land changing from the control of people who understand the industry to people who were holding land for the first time.
- (c) Some friction had arisen between sport and agriculture, which would never have occurred had

the land remained in the occupation of those who understood both businesses.

- (d) An unsatisfactory position existed for the rating authorities, who could never forecast beyond a limited period of years how much they could count on receiving from rates on sporting assets.
- (e) A completely mistaken idea had grown in the minds of the public, who were led to believe that sport was the asset of a few wealthy men instead of (as in fact it is) an asset to the community as a whole.

The effect of the war on the situation has begun to show :

- (a) A reduction of rateable values of nearly 50 per cent.
- (b) Some permanent deterioration caused by short-sighted administration of wartime legislation.
- (c) The universal shrinkage in capital values, which can best be described as identically the same loss which would have occurred to a farm which had been badly farmed for three years. This loss is not irreparable, but may rapidly become so if immediate steps are not taken to deal with the matter.

In the present state of uninformed public opinion there is every indication that sport as an asset to the Highlands may be lost by default. It is perhaps worth noting that whereas the owner or tenant is, quite properly, severely dealt with if the best use is not made of a farm, there is nothing to prevent an owner or a tenant neglecting the sporting value of his land. Neglect of a farm shows no loss to the rating authority, but neglect of a sporting asset rapidly reduces its rateable value.

After the last war, there was a heavy loss of sporting values throughout Europe, except in Great Britain; the same thing occurred in Southern Ireland, and a similar situation began to arise in New Zealand. In every one of these cases, the Government concerned, having allowed the loss to occur, had subsequently to embark on extensive legislation to reconstitute an industry which had not been considered worth while safeguarding.

If, therefore, a similar fate is not to overtake a valuable factor in the prosperity of the Highlands, and one of its

national industries, what steps are now required, not only to retain this industry, but to expand it in such a way that it can be of the greatest advantage to the community as a whole, and to make it available, from a recreational point of view, to a far larger proportion of the population than has hitherto been possible?

What seems to me necessary for the maintenance of a valuable national asset is:

1. Abolition of short leases, which have been the main cause of the deterioration of deer-stalking.
2. Control of sporting rights on lines similar to that of Agriculture by Agricultural Executive Committees.
3. Greater co-operation between forestry, agricultural and sporting interests, which are all capable of development with proper understanding and mutual goodwill. National parks should be included in any scheme of post-war development. Deer should be given proper status as game, and a close season instituted covering the period when they are not fit for food. Marauding deer should, of course, be regarded as outlaws.

The whole situation can be boiled down to the question. "Is sport in the Highlands to be regarded as a national asset?" If so, what are the best means to be adopted to maintain and preserve it in the future?

## XIII

### *JOCK*

“A dog reflects the family life.”

A. CONAN DOYLE, “The Case Book  
of Sherlock Holmes.”

**I** SUPPOSE nearly everybody has at one time or another kept dogs of sorts, some for companionship, some for sport. Whether these are a success or not depends on the owner. There are people who never ought to be allowed to keep a dog at all. A well-trained companion or a well-trained sporting dog may both in their respective spheres claim the admiration of the outsider. The dog which combines sporting qualities, is also a companion and gives no trouble in the house is rare. There can be but few greater minor nuisances than the advent of an acquaintance accompanied by ill-trained dogs over which he has not complete control. I have suffered from such visitations. The owner of two large, ill-trained, smelly and disobedient animals very much in the way when their presence is not wanted, and very much out of the way when they are, visited me on occasions. A hunt all over the place with shouts and whistles irritating to the ear and excessively jarring to the nerves was the invariable accompaniment. The culprits had only one merit—the pig-bucket, when the joyful moment arrived for their departure, was usually as clean as a whistle—though why whistles should be employed as synonyms for cleanliness I have never discovered. The owner then departed, endeavouring to assume the outward appearance of ‘Ye olde Englishe Country Squire,’ a role which he was not in the least fitted to enact, but the effect of which he imagined was heightened by the couple which were supposed to dog his footsteps. They, in fact, though full to repletion after their visit to the pig-bucket, were scouring every quarter of the countryside, well beyond range of any summons, in the hope of picking up any tasty scraps, living or dead, within the three-mile limit.

Another type of dog-fancier can be guaranteed to break the spirit of any dog unfortunate enough to be admitted as a permanent inmate of the home circle within a very short period. A fat and attractive puppy of any species is selected. For a time it thrives and everyone delightedly exclaims, "What a dear little dog!" The dear little dog, overcome with emotion at such tributes, retires to the corner which it has selected as being most suitable as a lavatory, and is then, to the accompaniment of loud feminine squeaks and cries of dismay, banished to the outer darkness.

"Not quite trained yet," remarks the owner, "but it'll soon learn." It does.

The visitor returning a few weeks later scarcely recognises the animal which seeks refuge under the table, after one inquisitorial sniff, and regards the company with stolid lack-lustre eyes.

When I was younger I owned a dear little sable collie which I taught to retrieve. He had a very good nose and a tender mouth. I was away in the South and left him in charge of the keeper. The latter one day took him on the hill and shot him dead by mistake, and for many years I never owned another dog.

Collies were very popular in those days. Then lady breeders took them in hand and evolved a horrible, narrow-headed, long-nosed animal which had but little resemblance to the breed to which it was supposed to belong. The real collie, though said to be uncertain in temper, is a very intelligent and clever animal.

It was after I married that we decided again to acquire a dog. We were living in London. A large dog in these circumstances was ruled out, though some people seem to differ on the point. To keep a dog such as a Labrador in a small flat or London house is sheer cruelty. They cannot receive proper attention and exercise, unless the owner devotes to them a large proportion of time.

We decided on an Aberdeen terrier. Dogs were offered from all sorts of unexpected sources, but eventually negotiations were opened with a lady in Rugby whose communication appeared the most promising.

Then one morning the door of my room opened, and my

wife appeared. In her arms was a small black bundle with shining buttons of eyes, one ear cocked enquiringly, the other drooping raffishly. She put him down and he lumbered hesitatingly, a small dark ball, towards me, stopped and looked enquiringly into my face. A ten-shilling postal order clinched the bargain and Jock became our own. I wish every ten shillings I have parted with had given me so rich a dividend. Very small, he was full of character. There was no trace of fear. At first I took him abroad on a lead. Discarding this as an experiment, he trotted contentedly behind me, the object of admiring glances from passers-by. From the first he made friends easily. I have known bibulous-looking sandwich-board men relax their self-centred austerity to remark, "'ullo, Scotty." He would give a friendly wag to his tail and trot busily onwards. For many years afterwards, in shops and on chance encounters, enquiries would be made as to his welfare. The man at the Stores who presided over the destinies of the perambulating canine population was a great friend of his; so was the retired commissionaire who owned a mincing Pomeranian. Jock never liked the latter, but tolerated his presence for the sake of her master.

I have said that he was a friendly dog, and this perhaps was unusual, for his kind do not, as a rule, make friends readily. Intolerant immobility is the most that a stranger venturing on overtures may expect. Jock was different. He had so happy and trustful a nature that he expected similar qualities in every other sentient being he encountered. I remember a black cat he discovered lurking behind some railings in Eaton Gardens. It was his first encounter with a new species. Stopping dead, he cautiously poked forward an enquiring nose, while the tilt of his tail would not have disgraced a prize setter. The nose, when within range, suddenly received a smart scratch, while the cat, hissing loudly, shot into the area. Jock nearly fell over backwards in his astonishment. It was his first rebuff. Then, giving vent to a series of falsetto yelps, he shot into the middle of the road, pursued by the triumphant cat, who had recovered from its first astonishment at securing so easy a victory. I rushed after him: Taxis and vans swerved madly into the kerb. There



was a scuffle in the road as the cat got home with a lightning kidney-punch; more agonising yelps from Jock, and objurgations from various drivers. Eventually I captured him, a thoroughly scared and demoralised puppy. After this epic he never liked cats and stalked past those he encountered on the tips of his toes, ferociously growling.

He still made friends readily with any human being, and once, when we were living by the river, followed one elderly couple from Maidenhead to Bray while his distracted mistress galvanised the police into unwonted activity. The elderly couple that evening returned him, thanks to the name on his collar, and nearly wept after I had explained for the twentieth time that he was not for sale. The old gentleman presented me with his address and implored me to let him know if we ever changed our minds.

An old lady who professed to hate dogs adored him, and I have seen him jump straight from pavements, black with mud and dirt, on to her silk dress, to be greeted with a laughing remonstrance.

On one occasion, he was then about eighteen months old, I received a frantic telephone message to say that he was lost. My wife, it seemed, had met a friend at the corner of Sloane Street and Knightsbridge. Deep in the mysteries attached to a discussion on female clothing she had forgotten Jock's existence, and when she looked for him he had disappeared. The policeman on point duty, two commissionaires and several willing hangers-on were enlisted in the subsequent search. Three large shops she traversed, collecting a gradually increasing train of helpers. To the casual observer one Aberdeen is very much like another, and of Jock there was no sign. These events took place about 11.30 a.m. At one o'clock, having joined the search-party, we were walking dejectedly along Knightsbridge and turned down towards Lowndes Square. As we passed the closed door of a large drapery establishment an appealing bark broke in on our deliberations. We stopped. The bark was repeated. My wife rushed at the door and pealed furiously at the bell. Almost at once the door was opened and a small dark bundle hurled itself on her with hysterical yelps of delight, to the accompaniment,

of amused smiles and the admiring explanations of a large part of the male and female employees of the drapery store. It was Jock. Bored by his mistress's preoccupation, he had decided to start a tour of investigation on his own, had entered the shop and started busily to explore its mysteries. When it closed at the lunch hour he had been imprisoned by an assistant, and in course of being exhibited to her companions had recognised our footsteps in the quiet street outside. On the whole, his attitude seemed to imply that he had been rather clever than otherwise. We were too relieved at his reappearance to be angry for long.

Once again he was lost, this time in Victoria Street. Again frantic telephone messages brought me to the scene of action. This time there was no excuse. Quietly and unobtrusively he had vanished while his mistress forged resolutely ahead, intent on an overdue appointment. At the foot of Ashley Gardens she became aware of his absence. We were at our wits' end. Now, his weakness—even the most perfect being has some flaw—was, it is hard to put it in cold print, his stomach. Dainties of all kinds, more particularly those with which his organs would be certain to disagree, he loved. As we reviewed possible explanations for his absence I had a happy thought. Was there a food-shop of any kind near? There was. An ABC establishment stared us in the face. I entered and accosted a lady enmeshed in a wire cage. Had she seen a small Scots terrier? Rather vague, she thought she might have done. Might I make a search? I might and walked slowly down an aisle lined with linoleum, a narrow gangway set in a sea of shining tables and slowly masticating females. At the far end ecstatic exclamations attracted my attention. Four individuals surrounding plates of buns and cakes, jugs of milk and pots of tea, reticules, gloves, umbrellas and all the other camping-out equipment which accompany ladies up from the country on their excursions into the metropolis, were gazing admiringly at a small black object beneath them. One was pouring milk into a saucer, another prepared a plate of food. A small black nose quivered with excitement as two shining eyes remarked the preparations for the forthcoming treat. He was sitting on his haunches, begging. I swooped in black fury on the

party, and as I swooped he saw me. Down he came on all four legs and shot for safety beneath the voluminous skirts of one of his elderly admirers. The party for whom he was performing his endearing antics had scarcely become aware of my presence, though there were titters from the surrounding tables. No man appreciates the feeling that he is being made to look a fool, and a fool I felt, for I had nearly lost my temper. The little brute was well fed at home. Why should I be subjected to the amusement of total strangers for his benefit? My blood rose. I dived under the table and seized him by the scruff of the neck. Cries of "Brute!" and "Poor little thing!" assailed me as I hurtled with him through the door to rejoin my partner. A thoroughly demoralised dog scuttled homewards, ears pressed down, and not till the flat door was closed behind him did our relief find vent in words.

His most amusing accomplishment was hide-and-seek. He loved toys, particularly small woolly bears, squawking ducks and such like, and would with these play quietly by the hour. When told to "hide his eyes" he would gallop out of the room, quivering with excitement. Dead silence for a few seconds. Then a black nose and one eye would sidle furtively round the corner of the door. Greeted by a shout, these would instantly vanish. Meanwhile his toy would be hidden. A call of "All right" would bring him charging back. After a preliminary tear round the room he would settle down to a systematic search behind cushions, under chairs or any possible hiding-place. Within a few seconds, his treasure found, he would retire to his favourite corner, expressing his delight by furious growlings.

He had never suffered from distemper and it was our great fear. One autumn day he caught cold, and though he threw it off, never seemed to be quite the same. Then my wife took him to Scotland on a visit. She returned early one morning. I heard the patter of little feet and a wet nose was thrust into my cheek, but it was clear that he was far from well. The vet. came but would give no definite opinion. For some reason or other we had to leave London, and Jock was put in charge of the servant. It was bitterly cold snowy weather and he was put to sleep

at the foot of the cook's bed beneath an open window. On our return to London it was apparent that he was really ill. My wife nursed him devotedly but distemper had him fast.

One morning a telephone call summoned me and I rushed back to the chair on which he lay. There was slight foam on his mouth and his little frame was shaken by convulsive tremors. His half-closed eyes were dull, but he opened them once and feebly wagged his tail. Gently I stroked him, and with a painful effort he touched my fingers with his tongue. At such times women are braver than men. An hour later he died.

He lies on a green knoll shaded by larches, and in the evening light rabbits come and play about the short cropped turf.

It is twenty-five years since he died. I have never owned another dog since.

## XIV

### *THE INTERNATIONAL HUNTING EXHIBITION BERLIN, 1937*

"Thus will I save my credit in the shoot."

"Love's Labour's Lost," Act iv, Scene i.

IT must have been towards the end of 1936, or early in 1937, that rumours began to circulate regarding an international exhibition of sporting trophies to be held in Berlin in the following autumn. A friend of mine had written privately asking if members of the Shikar Club were lending any of their trophies, but, no official intimation being forthcoming, the situation was vague. There for a time the matter rested, until at length the rumours began to assume concrete form. In my capacity of Honorary Secretary of the Shikar Club of Great Britain I received more letters, asking if this country was taking part in the Exhibition. Certain facts began to emerge. It appeared that a Department of the Government had received a communication from Germany asking that Great Britain might be represented. So far as I am aware, no answer was returned to this enquiry. In any case, no active steps were taken. Then I received a letter from Wing-Commander James, M.P., saying that a certain Herbert Behlau, one of the secretaries at the German Embassy, was anxious to discuss the matter with me. A meeting was arranged, and he urged me to do what I could to ensure the co-operation of British sportsmen.

There were many difficulties in the way. Time was very short. A scratch collection of heads was of no use at all. The trophies exhibited would have to be the best of their kind, and I felt extremely doubtful if those I wanted to secure would be lent. Above all, money had to be provided from somewhere. I talked the whole thing over with my old friend Mr. J. B. Burlace, the managing director of Rowland Ward, who had given me every help on previous occasions of a similar kind, though these had been on a smaller scale. He, too, was very doubtful if a





really representative collection of big-game trophies could be got together in the short time at our disposal, for these preliminary talks took place in May 1937 and the Exhibition was due to open in Berlin in November. The list of exhibits closed on July 1st.

Ultimately, I may add here, the German authorities granted an extra month in which to make any arrangements; but even so there was none too much time. The money difficulty was the great problem. Mr. Eric Parker, who was, at this time, editor of the "Field," gave me invaluable help, and procured the support of the late Sir Stephen Gaselee. In his book, "The Failure of a Mission," the late Sir Nevile Henderson, who had just taken up his post in Berlin, writes: "Arrangements had been made in 1936 by General Goering, as game warden of the Reich and an enthusiastic sportsman, to hold a great hunting Exhibition in Berlin in November 1937. When I arrived at my post in May, I found that almost every European country was to be represented at this Exhibition except Great Britain. Hunting is of all sports the least calculated to arouse national jealousies and ill-feeling, and it seemed to me, therefore, and particularly in view of Britain's recognised role in the world of sport, unfortunate that we should not participate. I consequently appealed to the Foreign Office for help in securing a contribution from H.M. Government, even at that late hour, for this purpose. Thanks to their good offices, a small sum was forthcoming." Sir Nevile adds an unsolicited tribute to my work which I value very highly, the more so as it is the only one I received from anyone in an official position. He was on the spot, realised the many difficulties with which I had to contend, and for this reason I value his appreciation all the more.

When asked to estimate the minimum expenditure likely to be incurred by our participation I placed it at between £2000 and £3000. I fancy in the end it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of the smaller figure. All things considered, this was very reasonable.

Without the help of Sir Nevile a British exhibit would have been impossible, and both I and all who took part in its organisation owe him a very great debt. He backed me up through thick and thin, and helped me in many



difficulties. His mission was a failure; its success, in the very nature of things, was an impossibility.

The annual "Shikar" dinner took place in June. Lord Lonsdale, the chairman, gave me his blessing. I placed the matter before the members and they loyally supported the undertaking. About six weeks was all I had in which to collect and despatch the trophies.

Though it was out of the question that each species of big game should be represented, I aimed at collecting the best specimens of all the more important and spectacular varieties which would appeal not only to the expert but to the person who knew but little about natural history.

After endless writing, interviewing, travelling and inspections I got all the heads I wanted with one or two exceptions. Unfortunately these were heads I particularly wished to have, but the owners were adamant in their refusal to loan them.

Their Majesties the King and Queen graciously consented to lend some of the heads which they themselves had shot, and with such support my task was made very much simpler. H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester displayed great interest in the Exhibition and lent some of his finest heads, as did the Earl of Athlone. Needless to say, the trophies lent by the Royal Family were the main centre of attraction to the large crowds who visited the British section of the Exhibition in Berlin.

"Mr. B.," as Mr. Burlace is known among big-game hunters, and I went over to Berlin in August and made arrangements with regard to the disposal of the trophies when they should arrive; and, which was a very difficult matter, estimated the amount of wall space needed when they were hung. This, of course, had to be done in their absence. I knew from experience how fatal it was to underestimate the space required, and determined to be on the generous side. I was very nearly right, but not quite; in the African section some of the larger heads had, unavoidably, to be 'bunched.' In any case, I could not have obtained greater accommodation, but it was a pity as it rather spoiled the general effect. Captain Seth Smith and his staff at the Pantechicon, who were responsible for the despatch of the exhibits to Germany, did everything

possible to help, and by the day fixed all had safely arrived in Berlin, whither Mr. B. and I had preceded them.

I am proud to say that every one of the 343 heads, ranging in size from buffalo, wapiti and moose to small antelope and roe, arrived back in England, were exhibited for a month at the Imperial Institute in London in January 1938, and returned to their owners without a single complaint as to damage being received. This, I think, constitutes something of a record, and the credit is entirely due to the staff of the Pantechicon and to that of Rowland Ward. To them I owe a great debt.

On their arrival in Berlin the heads were taken out of their packing-cases and laid on the floor of one of the Exhibition buildings in the Grünewald, a hall about the size of Olympia. The new buildings in which the Exhibition was to be held were not fully completed even on the opening date. They were certainly very extensive and well laid out. From a main central hall, called the Hall of Honour, rooms and galleries opened which were quite capable of containing all the 26,000 exhibits without overcrowding. I should not like to estimate how many miles I walked in these galleries during the course of the Exhibition! Fortunately the head secretary, Fräulein Stollwerck, was not only extremely capable and efficient but talked excellent English. She it was who extricated me from many difficulties and smoothed away all obstacles. What I should have done without her help I do not know.

It had been decided before we left England that the British section should not be entered for prize competition. This I still think was the right course. When, however, the judging of heads started, the Duke of Mecklenburg, who was chairman of the African section, on which committee Mr. Burlace was also serving, drew us aside and asked us to reconsider this resolution.

"It is absurd," he said, "for us to give prizes for heads in other sections, when people who know will go straight into the British section where they will see much better heads of the same species with no prize at all. . . . Also, if you cannot alter your decision, many foreigners will think that you are putting on side and being superior!"

Mr. B. and I talked the whole thing over and came to

the conclusion that the Duke was right, and that the proper procedure to adopt was to allow heads in the British section to be entered for competition with trophies from other countries. It was, in truth, the sole course open to us.

We as a nation do not want to be superior. Unfortunately there is no doubt that that is the impression too often conveyed to the foreigner.

The judging took place previous to the opening. The judges were selected from different nationalities, and to each section several were appointed. I did not envy those who had to deal with the cervidae. They had the hardest task, for the cult of the stag in Europe is taken very seriously. The stags' heads alone numbered over 1500, the majority of course, as is the Continental custom, being skulled; there were 2500 roe heads, as well as a great number of mounted and skulled heads of various other species, numbering in all something like 16,000.

Even Count Pali Palffy, who is well known as a sportsman all over the Continent, after a week of it said to me, "Well, no one loves stags more than I do, but I don't want to see a stag's head again for months!" I shall have more to say of him later.

I was asked to act as chairman of the Asiatic section, with Dr. Lutz Heck, the Director of the Berlin Zoological Gardens, and Dr. Ernst Schafer. The latter had explored many little known districts of Asia, some of which I had visited, and showed many very interesting heads shot by himself, including some of the takin, the only specimens in the Exhibition in addition to my own, and of the Dwarf Burhel, or Blue sheep, a sub-species, new to science, discovered by him in the gorges of Szechuen.

Having admitted our trophies for competition, we won 137 first prizes, 63 second, and 7 shields of honour presented for very rare or remarkable trophies. The British section gained also the highest possible honour, one of the two prizes awarded for the best collections. Poland secured that for Europe; Britain that for the best all-round section. The latter took the form of a beautiful porcelain model "Der Jaeger aus Kurpfalz"—The Horseman of the Palatinate—bearing the date "Volkstedt—1762." It is

at present at Buckingham Palace. We also won a first prize, a fine bronze model of a falcon, in the Falconry section.

In connection with the Exhibition the German Government held a series of shooting competitions, the main condition being that the teams should shoot with both gun and rifle. Almost as soon as I reached Berlin the British Ambassador asked me if I could tell him the best person with whom to get in touch in order to form a British team. I told him I only knew one man who was capable of doing this—Mr. (now Colonel) Cyril Mackworth Praed. On October 22nd the National Rifle Association were approached by the Foreign Office, and Mr. Mackworth Praed by the "Field." He, assisted by the dynamic energy of Sir Lionel Fletcher, a member of the Council of the National Rifle Association, got together a team consisting of himself, Sir Lionel, Major Ranken and Messrs. J. J. O'Leary, Ingram Capper and D. M. Chance. The National Rifle Association gave every assistance with ranges and markers, as did the Bisley Gun Club and Imperial Chemical Industries. They had only a fortnight's notice, and it is enormously to their credit that with so short a notice they came in third in the competition, Germany winning with 1733. Germany's second team, with 1669, the next best score, being counted as a reserve, Great Britain was awarded second place. Mr. Mackworth Praed was first in the shot-gun events, thus winning the clay bird championship of Europe, and was sixth in the individual aggregate. He received a silver bowl and a shot-gun. The National Rifle Association presented four of its silver medals to some of the Germans who had helped the team. A detailed account of the competition will be found in the "Journal" and the "Proceedings" of the National Rifle Association, 1937.

To hang satisfactorily nearly 350 heads in a week is not easy. I had first of all to lay them out on the floor, arranged in the manner in which I wanted them to appear on the wall. I had them grouped in Continental divisions as they were brought in, but the whole of the floor space was littered with heads and it was a hard task to get them sorted. However, it was done at last, though it took me

from nine in the morning to ten at night to get finished in time.

The head carpenter had worked for many years with a London firm. Under his orders was an underling who caused me considerable trouble. He, I never discovered why, always appeared in a fez, and was responsible for hanging the heads in the British section. There is quite an art in hanging large trophies and in placing the nail in such a way that no undue strain is involved. Of this art the fez wearer was singularly ignorant. So much so that one day a large buffalo head suddenly crashed to the floor. Fortunately no damage was done. I explained to the man how I wanted the nail replaced, and this, rather sulkily, he proceeded to do.

A day or two later I was rearranging the moose heads. These, about the most massive trophies of all, were very heavy. He would not place them in the way suggested, and I made him re-hang them three times before I got them arranged to my satisfaction. It was while this was in process of being done that a very nasty accident occurred. I was standing within a foot or so of one of the heads, which was about seven feet or so above the floor. Between me and the head was one of the German workmen. Without the slightest warning the head suddenly crashed to the wooden floor, bounced from it and struck the workman standing by me. He staggered back holding his arm. One of the heavy brow points had torn a great gash in his forearm which was pouring with blood. I thought he was going to faint, for he was as white as a sheet. We got him off to hospital, and the "Field" very generously gave him £5 as a help to his family while he was incapacitated. As soon as he was allowed out of hospital he came to see me, and with tears in his eyes thanked me for what I had been able to do for him. He explained that his injured arm prevented him from doing any heavy work, but begged to be allowed to come back in any capacity if he could be of use.

I can have no dispute with those who, having had first-hand experience of what the Germans have done, consider that the only good German is a dead one. By their calculated brutality against the Poles, the French, the Belgians, the Dutch, the Greeks, the Yugoslavians and Russians, to

mention but the first who come to mind, by the horrors of Rotterdam alone, they have placed themselves outside the pale of all civilised humanity. Terribly will they have to pay.

The judging of the trophies took the best part of a week. Then they were moved over to the Exhibition buildings on the other side of the road on motor trucks.

At last everything was ready and the opening day drew near. My wife had joined me in Berlin a day or two previously, and her companionship and help did much to support me at a difficult time, as I was beginning to feel strained and overworked. There were not a great many English visitors in Berlin, and despite the publicity given to it in the "Field," many seemed quite ignorant that such an Exhibition was in existence.

The Briton is a curious creature. We are the pioneers of big-game hunting; we have the best private collections in these islands, yet when I wrote and suggested that some of my friends whom I knew were keen, should come over and see what was certainly the best and most outstanding show of the kind ever held, more than one wrote back to say that he would have loved to come, but that he had promised to go to a shoot, or was hunting, or he did not know how to get there. Those who did come never regretted doing so.

It was only after the Exhibition had been opened that I had a chance to see anything of it myself, and then it was too vast to explore with any thoroughness. I was always finding something new to examine. The Belgian section was not far from the British one, and here I found two old friends, Tom van der Straten and his brother-in-law Hubert de Woot. I was delighted to see them again, and we had a great crack about old times when I had stayed with them in Belgium. I have described my experiences with them in "Big Game."

In the course of my duties I met some interesting people, among them Field-Marshal Blomberg, a tall, fine-looking man, with very blue eyes and a rosy complexion. Then one of the most powerful soldiers in Germany, within a year he had fallen into disgrace. He inspected the heads in the British section and then remarked, rather wistfully

I thought, "Ah! you English! you go everywhere in the world."

Himmler I met for a brief moment. His dark expressionless face has an almost prim look. Black eyes regard the world unsmilingly through rimless pince-nez. I should say that he has a cold, analytical mind, and a passion for method. He is said to enjoy reading and discussing foreign travel.

At one of the lunches given to those who were judging the trophies I sat next to a good-looking man of about fifty, with twinkling blue eyes and thick hair. I did not know his name but soon discovered that he talked excellent English. Hanging opposite us was a large picture of Hindenburg. My neighbour quizzed it critically for some moments and then, quite oblivious of the fact that we were surrounded by Germans and without troubling to lower his voice, turned to me and said, "He looks like an old English bull-dawg." The manner in which he gave this information was inimitable. That was my first introduction to Count Pali Palffy. He always made me laugh, and in whatever company I found myself, sooner or later I would hear roars of laughter, and of it he would be the centre. It made no difference by whom he was surrounded, for he talked English, French, German, Russian, Italian, Hungarian and I do not know how many other languages with equal facility. If a man has the God-sent gift of bringing laughter, much may be forgiven him, not that I have anything to forgive Pali!

Apart from my work in connection with the Exhibition, various meetings of the 'Conseil Internationale de la Chasse' were held. These I attended, for I had recently been elected one of the British representatives. Eric Parker, too, attended the meetings in the same capacity. M. Felix Ducrocq, the founder of the C.I.C., presided, and Palffy added zest to the proceedings by his unconventional attitude. After interminable colloquies which seemed to get nowhere, he suddenly got up and at the top of his very powerful voice roared out, "I am sure you are all very nice, but I have not the faintest idea what you are talking about!"

By drawing attention to certain abuses the C.I.C. has

done a good deal of useful work. Its activities now, of course, are at a standstill.

Dr. Schmidt, Hitler's celebrated interpreter, was always about at the more important functions, and I met him on several occasions. Dr. Stresemann, the son of the man who prior to the advent of Nazidom did his best to steer his country through her difficulties, was a charming man and a great ornithologist. Franz Rosenberg, a Norwegian, was one of the most delightful people I met. Tall and fair, he would have passed anywhere for an Englishman. We had many mutual friends and I corresponded with him regularly prior to the invasion of Norway. Since then the curtain has fallen. From many people in Berlin I met with great kindness. Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes was second in command to Sir Nevile Henderson, and both he and his wife showed me hospitality, which I recall with feelings of gratitude, on many occasions. It was at a dinner-party at their house that I met H.H. the Aga Khan and his beautiful wife, and Michael Cresswell, a secretary at the British Embassy, with whom I made great friends. His help was invaluable, and being gifted with a sense of humour he always saw the funny side of everything. We had many laughs.

The opening ceremony was very well staged. At the entrance to the buildings, behind a great gold stag, was a mounted Finnish hunter holding a crutch on which perched an eagle. By his side was another fur-clad Finn with some hunting-hounds. Unfortunately I never set eyes on this picturesque pair, as we had to get to our seats in the main hall before the arrival of the Reichsjägermeister and his staff. He passed into the hall through lines of green-clad foresters, whilst from hunting-horns were sounded the old German hunting-calls. After the opening ceremony Goering made a tour of the exhibition, and I escorted him and Sir Nevile round the British section. It was packed with a dense mob through which we had to fight our way. This, I thought, was bad staff work. Goering was particularly interested in the moose heads from Alaska, which are as superior to the European elk as is the Continental stag to the Scottish. I do not think he had ever seen such fine heads before. My takin came



in for passing notice, though I did not tell him that it was known among the more knowledgeable as 'Wallace's blonde.' It really looked 'the golden takin,' as my wife had spent a great deal of time before it went on its long journey cleaning the scalp and generally brushing it up.

On the night of the opening ceremony we attended an official dinner held under the auspices of the Hunting Society. Unfortunately the first item on the menu, hot lobster, arrived in such a condition that I hurriedly said to my wife, "Don't eat any of that." My warning was necessary, as one unfortunate female in the early hours of the morning had to be attended hurriedly by a doctor armed with a stomach-pump. There was a rumour that the host himself had not escaped unscathed, in consequence of which it was said that seven cooks on the next morning had been despatched to a concentration camp. Their fate was not entirely undeserved.

The menus at the banquets we attended were most attractive, bearing etchings of various species of game by Professor Lobenberg. I got two, of red deer and roe, and at a subsequent entertainment managed to annex some more. It happened thus. On arriving early at the hall where the dinner was to be held, in order to make quite certain about the seating arrangements, I found that the guests were at tables each holding eight people. To my horror, I discovered that I was the eighth at a table round which were the names of seven French dignitaries and their wives, with none of whom was I acquainted. Realising that I was for it, as my knowledge of French, to my lasting regret, is practically nil, I thought the best thing I could do was to get on with my menu collection before their arrival. Hastily annexing a wild boar, a new picture of a stag and a charming drawing of roe, I endeavoured to cram them up the back of my waistcoat. I was engaged in what must have looked like a particularly complicated form of Swedish exercise when the representatives of La belle France arrived *en masse*.

One night we were invited to attend a performance at the opera of "Die Freischütz." My wife and I were given a box almost adjoining that in which Goering and the Crown Prince and Princess of Denmark were seated. Not

being accustomed to such an exalted neighbourhood, I was much entertained though I know nothing about opera.

During the interval a head suddenly bobbed up in front of the box, and a voice exclaimed, "Where's the editor?" The voice belonged to Martin Stephens, then shooting editor of the "Field." His energy appeared to be indestructible, and he had managed to collect a series of nature photographs which won a gold medal; no mean achievement in Germany.

"I'm afraid I don't know," I answered.

Nothing daunted, he climbed over the front of the box.

"I say, do you know what all this is about?" said he.

I disclaimed all knowledge. Relieved at my answer, he plunged into an explanation. "Well, the old chap with the beard is the President of the Fauna Society, and he's frightfully sick with the young chap who's after the girl, for shooting a stag with an improving head."

It was ingenious, but I was not convinced.

"No?" said he enquiringly. "Don't you like it? Well, you give a better one."

Then he vanished. There was a sort of ripple down the line of boxes. The lights dimmed. Far down, near the stage, there was a muffled crash. I saw a figure in a tail-coat disappearing over the edge of the end box, very faintly I heard, "Sorry." I wondered if the editor had been discovered.

Martin Stephens, though not a young man, joined the R.A.F. at the beginning of this war. He rose to the rank of Wing-Commander and was awarded the D.F.C. ten days before his plane was lost over the Channel. His was a gallant end, and one which, I think, he himself would have chosen. May he rest in peace.

On another occasion we were asked to a party at the Berlin Palace, the former home of the ex-Kaiser. It was a lovely night, and gazing out of the windows at the buildings and towers surrounding the courtyard I wondered what his thoughts would have been had he been present. Scarlet-clad men servants, posted at intervals on the staircase, held lighted torches in sconces, and the spectacle with the uniforms of the men and gay dresses of the ladies was brilliant.

However striking the appearance of Nazi officials, most of whom were self-made, at such functions, in ordinary clothes the majority were not impressive. Especially when talking to foreign women did they seem self-conscious, awkward, and rather lost as to what to do with their hands. I was irresistibly reminded of descriptions of Napoleon's Court. Members of the old regime stood out conspicuously though their number was small. It was difficult to realise that I had last seen the little bent old gentleman in the brown uniform forty years before as a Lower boy at Eton. He was then Duke of Albany. It was said at the time when he went to live in Germany, that the Dukedom of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha had been offered to Prince Arthur of Connaught, and that on his refusal the Duke of Albany had become a subject of the Kaiser's. I was presented to him, and he obviously loved to talk of Balmoral, deer, and the Seaforth Highlanders, of which regiment he was Colonel. Another distinguished-looking figure with his grey beard and English appearance was the Duke of Ratibor. There were others, too, whose names I did not know.

Hitler I never saw, as on the occasion on which he visited the Exhibition we had gone to Brunswick to attend the ceremony of the Hainberg. This takes place annually. Unfortunately it was a wet misty day, but the play, enacted in the open in a wonderful natural setting, with the actors in mediaeval costumes winding up from a gorge below the spectators, carrying dead stags and wild boars, was very interesting and entertaining. One of the players is supposed to have broken the hunting laws by killing a young stag, and has to lie across the body while the chief huntsman, in front of the Baron and his guests, lays on with the flat of his sword.

Colonel Scherping, the highest official in rank next to Goering in the German Hunting Society, came up to me during this ceremony and said that I was invited by the latter to lunch at Karinhall, the Field-Marshal's hunting-box and country residence about forty miles outside Berlin. It is famous throughout Germany. I was told to be at the Leipzigerplatz at a certain hour, where I should find a bus which would take me and other guests to Schorfheide. On the appointed day I was there. There, too, was a bus.

I got in and found Alastair and Betty Gordon Cumming. They knew of my destination and were themselves going to see some of the wild birds and game which are kept in the Schorfheide. I was a little doubtful if I had made a mistake, and after we had started began to make some enquiries from the forester in charge of the party. To my horrôr, I found that I was in the wrong bus! I was going to a part of the Schorfheide which was exactly the other side of that preserve to Karinhall!

The forester spoke English, for which I was thankful. "But," said he, "this is going to be very difficult. When we stop it will take you at least half an hour to get to Karinhall by car—if we can get one. I will make enquiries. What time is your lunch?"

I hastily rummaged through my pockets to find my invitation card—a precaution I invariably take on occasions of this kind—and found that this time, when I most wanted it, I had left it behind!

"One o'clock," I said boldly.

"Have you got your card?" he asked, having noticed my search. I had to confess that I had left it behind.

"This is going to be even more difficult," said he. "It is not easy to get into Karinhall."

"When we stop, will you please try and get me a car?" I asked.

Three people were sent off to find a car. It was well after twelve o'clock. Betty and Alastair and the rest of the party had disappeared. In a state of agitation I waited. The minutes ticked on, I was beginning to feel desperate. A car suddenly shot into view. I turned to thank my official, but he almost pushed me in and got in himself.

"We may just do it," he said. "You'll never get in without someone with you. Especially as you can't talk German."

"Do you know anyone at Karinhall?" he asked as we drove through the wood. "I mean someone we can talk to when we arrive there. We shall never get at the Reichsjägermeister himself."

"But he asked me!" said I. My forester smiled.

"It would be better if you know someone. We will try, anyway," he said.

It was just on one o'clock when we reached a high gate across the road, on either side of which stretched a fence of barbed wire. By the gate was a sentry-box. In it was a steel-helmeted sentry, fully armed, and a telephone. Out jumped my companion and seized the telephone, while the sentry looked on. There followed a long colloquy with several intervals of silence. Then more talk. My forester poked his head out of the box. "I think it is all right," he said. "Someone will come."

In a few minutes I saw a figure running towards us through the trees. It was a soldier. When he reached us the gate was opened.

"Goodbye," said the forester. "I'm glad we did it."

"But what about the car?" said I.

"That's all right. Give him a mark or two if you like," and he seated himself by the driver.

We went along the road, I and the soldier, and presently saw a glimpse of buildings through the trees. They were harled with thatched roofs and stags' heads on the walls. Then we turned a corner and came to a guard-house. Here I waited, and presently a smart aide-de-camp in a brown uniform with pink facings led me inside, explaining that he could not talk any English. The delegates from other countries had not arrived. As a matter of fact, the time stated on the card of invitation was 1.30 p.m. and not one o'clock as I had thought. I was ushered into an enormous room to await their arrival. A window occupying the entire wall space at one end overlooked the lake. On the plain white walls hung the owner's best heads, save those which were on exhibition in Berlin. Stags from Rominten and Schorfheide were interspersed with elk, mouflon, fallow and roe deer. Ornamental candelabra, statues and tapestries added to the general effect.

Karinhall, built by its owner to his own design as a memorial to his first wife, Karin von Fock, with its stone walls, thatched roofs and red-and-white shutters, has great attraction. There are, I believe, something like two hundred rooms in all, varying in size from cosy smoking-rooms suitable for intimate gatherings, to huge reception-rooms capable of holding hundreds.

When the other guests, numbering about thirty in all,

had arrived, Goering appeared. The chief impression he made on me was that of tremendous reserves of energy and power, held under control. His light-brown hair, worn much longer than is usually the case in Germany, is brushed straight back from his forehead. In spite of his bulk, due to a war wound, he walks with a light, springy step. Below his wide brow, clear blue eyes, normally rather cold in expression, look directly.

Says Mr. Ward Price in "I know these Dictators": "Sixteenth-century England contained many men of his type—reckless, restless and ruthless—with masterful habits and a taste for bold adventure. Cardinal Wolsey, Henry VIII's great minister who built Hampton Court, had the same love of luxury and of spacious and beautiful environment. The tapestries, pictures and furniture with which General Goering surrounds himself might have belonged to a prince of the Italian Renaissance."

On this occasion Goering wore a sleeveless green jerkin, with stags' teeth set in silver as buttons. Loose, brown buckskin breeches were tucked into soft green leather boots, with fawn-coloured feet. His shirt was of white silk, with rather loose sleeves, and a wide collar, under which showed a blue-and-red striped tie. The Cross of the Order 'Pour la Mérite' (the German V.C.) hung at his throat, and round his waist was a green leather belt, from which was suspended a gold-hilted hunting-knife in a red sheath. On the left of his chest was the badge of the *Deutschjägerschaft* (the German Hunting Society), a stag's head with a swastika between the horns. The latter were of gold, and the swastika set with emeralds and diamonds. On his fingers were many rings. It was very much the sort of costume a boy would imagine, playing at Robin Hood.

Lunch was served in a room oblong in shape, with windows stretching down one side looking over the lake. Cabinets, sunk in the wall, contained silver, china and porcelain models, lit by soft cornice lighting, for it was a dull day. Down the long table graduating to each end stood large silver bowls of brown and gold chrysanthemums. Porcelain models of different species of deer were arranged between these. Exquisite glass bore Goering's

arms, as did the very simple silver beer mugs. The men servants wore eighteenth-century costumes of brown and green, the coats looped back over their thighs, jabots at the throat. Two maids were in the equivalent female dress, with mob-caps.

In the house were rugs and carpets made from bark, chair covers and cushions copied from German thirteenth-century designs, sporting pictures by Lobenberg, Pausinger and other well-known artists, and many objects too numerous to tabulate.

We were shown a fine collection of modern rifles, each fitted with its own telescopic sight. Pali handled them with interest.

"Have you got any guns?" he asked. Two or three were produced.

"Hm! I don't think much of them," said he. "You ought to have a good pair of English guns."

This, it seemed to me, did not go too well.

I asked him afterwards why he had been so outspoken. He stared at me and laughed.

"Why not? They were rotten guns anyway!"

The German rifles and telescopes are both about as good as can be made, but their sporting guns are not up to the best English ones.

Pali much amused everyone by 'calling' a stag through a horn used for this purpose. He told me that, with the wind right, in the Carpathians he could call up a stag for over a mile. There is a great art in such calling, and it is one which is not mastered by everyone. Pali had his own 'call' with him, and used to perform in the most unexpected places, much to the surprise of some of the Berlin policemen. On one occasion, having been asked to a lunch-party where he expected to meet a number of his friends, on entering the hotel he thought he would have a little joke. Suddenly flinging open the door, without waiting to be announced, he advanced roaring as loudly as any of the most seasoned monarchs of his native land. Unfortunately he had selected the wrong room, and terrified old ladies were tripping over each other in their endeavours to escape the strange creature who had invaded their solitude.

The Exhibition originally was intended to remain open from November 3rd to the 21st. So popular was it that the authorities extended this period for another week. The average attendance was about 10,000 per day, which number was doubled during the week-ends. The total attendance was somewhere in the neighbourhood of half a million.

Before leaving Germany I was asked for a week's chamois-stalking in Austria. This was too good an opportunity to be missed, as I had had no exercise or fresh air for months, and I had a most enjoyable ten days. Early in December I returned to Berlin and saw to the final packing up of the heads before returning to England.

The "Field" had arranged to display the British exhibit for the benefit of those who had not been able to go to Germany, and for this purpose had secured a large hall in the Imperial Institute. I supervised the hanging of the trophies, which included some additional heads, and though they did not, as a whole, present the same splendid spectacle as they had in Berlin, some of the individual groups gained in their new setting. The moose heads in particular, occupying as they did the whole of one end of the hall, looked remarkably well.

Their Majesties honoured the Exhibition with their presence one afternoon, when I had the great honour of escorting them round and pointing out the more important trophies. The Earl of Athlone and H.R.H. Princess Alice graciously consented to honour the opening ceremony. H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester also visited the Imperial Institute. The splendid collection of wild-life photographs which the "Field" had collected proved a great attraction.

The total attendance in London was somewhere round about 4000. Such exhibitions have but little appeal for the general public in this country. It seems a pity, for no such collection will be shown again for many years. In Berlin the Exhibition buildings were about four miles from the centre of the town. The Imperial Institute is less than a mile from Hyde Park corner.

So terminated an experience which I should have been sorry to miss.



Some of us, I think, when we met in Berlin in that autumn of 1937 indulged in a good deal of wishful thinking. We could not believe that all the smiling, apparently friendly people we met could acquiesce in again plunging the world into horrors worse than were endured when we were twenty years younger; that all the time preparations were proceeding behind the scenes, backed by sinister and ruthless efficiency, which made what we saw of about as much value as the tinsel on a cracker; that all the talk of fostering the good feeling about sport and comradeship meant, literally, nothing. We were told by one of our political leaders, that although there was nothing in "Mein Kampf" to justify "confident optimism" we should be equally wrong in taking the despairing view that as things had been so would they remain. What a pity that we had none of us then seen "The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp"!



CHAMOIS ALARMED



## XV

### *GOOD HUNTING*

"It occupyes the mynde, which else might chance to muse  
On mischiefe, malice, filth and fraudes, that mortall men do use."

GEORGE GASCOIGNE, in the "Commendation  
of the nobel Arte of Venerie."

**I**T would not be unfair to say that we in these islands have given a lead to other nations in sport. Certainly this is true so far as big-game hunting is concerned. Here we have only two species, the red deer and the roe. Fallow and Japanese deer can scarcely be counted. We are, however, fortunate in that the pursuit of these animals is carried on amid surroundings almost ideal, and calls into play the best qualities of the hunter. Seriously as the cult of the stag and the roe is taken on the Continent, the former animal is almost always pursued in wooded country. That this is his natural habitat is undoubted, but poor though the trophy he provides compared to his big brother, the Scottish stag more than makes up for this by the fact that he is stalked in the open, can be spied from afar and his movements noted amid high hills and magnificent scenery. The only Continental sport to compare with Scottish stalking is the chase of the chamois. For this reason I should place it first among Continental sports.

When I was in Germany in 1937, in charge of the British section of the International Hunting Exhibition, I was given the opportunity of shooting in the Schorfheide, and later of killing a mouflon in the Hartz Mountains. It has always seemed to me a pity that this splendid little sheep could not be introduced into Scotland. There are various localities in which there seems no reason why they should not flourish.

The Schorfheide is a large tract of woodland thirty miles or so north of Berlin. It was fenced off to the north and east in early times so that its boundaries might be known to those landowners who did not acknowledge the

rights of the Sovereign, for it was even in those days marked for a royal hunting-ground. Both the great Elector and Frederick I of Prussia saw to it that the fence was kept in repair, though it had been completely broken down by the end of the eighteenth century. It is now again fenced, and here the German emperors indulged in that form of hunting which to us seems hardly to be dignified under the name of sport.

It was on a rather cold, dull autumn morning that I took my place in the luxurious bus in the Leipzigerplatz which was to take us to our destination. With me were my wife and Lady Gordon Cumming, a friend of old standing. I had been to the Schorfheide earlier in the year to look for a stag. This was in September, before the rut, and though I had had no luck I had enjoyed seeing the fallow deer, of which there are a number, besides mouflon, which have been introduced into many parts of Germany, and a few roe, from one of the 'hochstands' which to me are always fascinating. These small huts, for that is what they are in reality, lined with moss, with a seat and windows commanding views of the most likely places in which game may appear, are built in trees or on tall fir stems. They are reached by ladders screened by bushes or trees, and are usually situated on the edge of the wood overlooking open glades. There is to me always a Peter Pan atmosphere about them. Being above the game, the latter very rarely pay any attention to the occupants of the hut. On my first visit I was shown a very elaborate stand which was a favourite of the ex-Kaiser's. A steep bank fell sharply away to a bare open plain, partly cultivated with plantations of fir. Level with the top of the bank and connected with it by a wooden bridge was the stand. To the top of the bank ran a narrow path, strewn with fir needles to deaden the sound of footsteps and protected from sight by hedges of fir. On the plain below were set wooden pegs with, on their sides facing the hut, the distances marked! However, when I visited this hut there was no game to be seen. Then it was clear and sunny, a good light and sharp shadows. In November it was dull and misty, with a thin drizzle, and perishingly cold.

At the guest-house we were met by a party of green-clad foresters who blew a fanfare on their hunting-horns as the bus drew up at the door. Unaccustomed to such a welcome and feeling acutely self-conscious, we descended to be welcomed by the Forstmeister. He allotted jägers to each of the party. Some went in cars, but we were despatched in a small wooden 'machine' drawn by two horses.

Thinking that such sport as I was lucky enough to get would be at driven game, I had provided myself with a double .275, for it is much easier to take running shots with a double rifle. Unfortunately, such a weapon is ill-adapted for 'pirschfahrten,' which consists in driving about the forest until one encounters one's prospective victim. I, so my jäger informed me in eager but rudimentary English, had been allotted "an old and good stag." For a considerable time we drove about searching for this animal, while the weather grew steadily worse. Accustomed as I had been for some weeks to the overheated rooms of the Exhibition, living in a constant whirl of parties, dinners, meetings and work, I had neglected my preparations, was most unsuitably dressed and frozen with cold. After turning down various rides and circling about part of the vast wood we at length approached a feeding-place and saw a number of stags. The jäger motioned me to get ready. I got ready. Driving slowly along, he by signs indicated which stag I was to shoot. Shivering, miserable, in a very uncertain frame of mind, and acutely conscious of my audience, I slithered to the ground and clumsily crept behind a tree. The deer, though only about a hundred and fifty yards off, in the dim light of the wood were anything but easy to see, bunched as they were in a compact group. I was not altogether sure that I was going to aim at the right stag. I was cold, wet, feeling rather guilty, and my glasses were dim. Consequently I was not surprised, but merely intensely irritated, to find that I had missed. The deer, not greatly alarmed, moved off at a trot. The jäger and I followed. From a kind of sunk butt from which the movements of the deer when feeding were observed I scored another miss. The jäger nobly controlled his feelings, and

thoroughly wretched I followed him sheepishly back to the 'machine.'

For the rest of the day we drove about the wood. The jäger and I made excursions into dense thickets through which wound narrow paths and from which, well screened, we investigated likely looking openings. We saw stags again, plenty of them, but not our friend of the morning. A fine 14-pointer walked past within fifty yards of us. The jäger reluctantly shook his head. It was a young stag.

We got back to the guest-house in the afternoon and found most of the other rifles had been successful. I felt like a boy at school who had 'let down the side.' There is no more awful feeling. Everyone was very nice about it, but I felt all the time they were saying, "That great ass Wallace has gone and mucked it!"

Then we had a more or less formal dinner, with some speeches. Afterwards, when it was dark, we were taken outside to where the deer were laid out in a row, with jägers holding flares and the headlights of cars showing up the heads. There was a line of jägers drawn up behind, and the head jäger came up formally to the Forstmeister, saluted, and said, "So many stags were killed in Schorfheide to-day." Then a fanfare was blown on hunting-horns and we drove back to Berlin in the dark.

It had been arranged that on the following day I should return, so, profiting by experience, I borrowed a rifle fitted with a telescopic sight from my jäger. My wife was kind enough to come with me, and we all three set out through the wood. After some time we found a number of stags, but not the one I had missed the day before. There was, however, a good enough royal which the jäger said was suitable. We accordingly endeavoured to stalk him, but without at first very much success. It was, in fact, quite late in the afternoon when they lay down under some trees on the crest of a ridge. After a rather trying stalk, for they could command a wide area of the wood, we managed to get within a hundred and fifty yards. It was not easy to make out which was the beast I was supposed to shoot, as I could talk but very little German. At length, with the aid of a rough sketch, we were able to understand each

other, and I found that I had indicated the right animal. The light was getting steadily worse, and even with a telescopic sight it was none too easy to see. After waiting for half an hour I was beginning to despair, when the deer started to rise, the younger stags first. Then the stag I wanted got to his feet, and through the tree-trunks I had a clear view of his shoulder. At the shot they dashed off down the slope. It was hard to distinguish their forms clearly, but one separated himself from the others, wavered, tottered and collapsed. When we got up to him he was quite dead.

He was a royal, his horns about 36 inches long, with a nice spread, and for Scotland would have been first class. In Germany he was quite moderate. But it is the stalk that counts, not the head, and a 'stalk' such as I have attempted to describe is the rule in Germany, though in really wild country such as the Carpathians to secure a good head is very much more difficult. Here not only does the stalker require infinite patience, experience and good shooting, sometimes at long ranges to be successful, but he must also be aided by the goddess of chance, a fickle creature whom no human being can control.

The pursuit of the mouflon in Germany is not dissimilar to the chase of the red deer.

I had always wanted to shoot a mouflon. Why, I am not quite sure, except that he is such a handsome little beast with his white saddle, rich chestnut-and-black colouring and smartly marked legs; that, and the fact that wild sheep of any species have always held a great attraction for me. No sporting trophy is equal to theirs, and the big sheep of the great mountain ranges of Central Asia provide the blue riband of the stalking world. Never, alas, now am I likely to see one of these in the flesh, but I was more than delighted shortly after my experience in Schorfheide to be told that I had been given permission to stalk mouflon in the Hartz Mountains. These sheep, as everyone knows, came originally from Corsica and Sardinia. They were introduced into Germany by a business man called Tessdorf about thirty years ago. Small herds have now been established in many parts, and, being very strictly preserved, were doing well in 1937. They were imported into



Austria in 1841, again into Upper Austria in 1868, fresh blood being brought in in 1890 and 1910.

The best German heads come from Pless, and the four best in the International Hunting Exhibition in Berlin were from Czechoslovakia. The best head from here, on formula, had 225.8 marks. The best German head gained 221.8 marks and came from the Hartz. The best from this district, of which I have measurements by our own system, was  $33\frac{1}{2}$  inches long by  $10\frac{1}{4}$  inches in circumference.

To be successful in an International Exhibition measurements of, roughly, 32 inches long with a girth of over 10 inches would be necessary (something over 180 marks by formula). Heads with a wide tip-to-tip measurement are more highly prized than those with ingrowing horns.

The number of rams allowed to be shot in the district in the eastern end of the Hartz which I visited were from three to five out of a total number of shootable rams of fifteen. The whole herd numbered about fifty.

The pleasure I anticipated from the trip was enhanced by the fact that the Diplomat with whom I had made friends in Berlin said that he would accompany me. Not only was it very much pleasanter to have a companion, but the fact that he spoke German fluently smoothed away many difficulties. We set out one morning from Berlin in the Diplomat's car and drove westward mile after mile down the wide double-tracked autobahn, through country which, flat though it was, had for me the charm of novelty. Towards midday, after we had left the autobahn at Magdeburg, a low range of hills rising above the plain told me that we were nearing our destination, and soon we were climbing the foothills. The Hartz Mountains average about 1300 feet for most of their length, which is about 50 miles. The highest point is the famous Brocken (3700 feet), and they cover about 20 miles from north to south. At the eastern end there are two State and several private forests.

At Mägdesprung, the Virgin's Leap, we were met by the Forstmeister who had charge of the district. Dressed in a smart green hunting uniform with a flat-topped peaked cap, he engaged the Diplomat in conversation, whilst I, feeling rather a fool as one always does on such occasions

(even though the latter gave me the translation of their talk), stood by catching a word or two occasionally and reflecting how much more interesting life would be had I realised years ago what I should miss by not being able to talk French and German. Cold lunch occupied but a short time and we were ready to start. A few minutes' drive in the car took us to a path which branched off into the wood. Here stood a familiar object, a 'machine,' as such conveyances were always known in Scotland in my youth.

At once I knew what was to take place. We were going to do a 'pirschfahrt,' to which I had grown accustomed in Schorfheide. There, as I have related, I did not cover myself with glory! However, all this had happened a month before, and now the Diplomat had added to my indebtedness to him, lending me his Mannlicher fitted with a telescopic sight. This, under his directions, I now proceeded to try. The first shot was high, the second at the right elevation, and the third in the bull. Up to my knees in undergrowth, propped against the stem of a tree, very cold and not too happy, this seemed good enough to go on with, so on we went.

I always feel rather guilty when I am allowed to 'pirschfahren.' At the back of my mind I am conscious of the feeling that I ought to be doing more to earn my shot. It was the customary method of hunting, so there was nothing to do but acquiesce, though very different to my imaginings. I had had visions of snow-clad rocks, wintry, windy heights, and wide open spaces with a few stunted pines. Here I had pictured myself climbing precariously, a spy-glass on my back, through which, if I were lucky, I hoped presently to spy a herd of mouflon.

Instead were sombre woods of fir, broken by openings in which grew beech and oak, with, at intervals, glades and narrow rides. These bent and twisted round corners and undulations. The woods were bounded by meadows, now dull and grey, but which in summer must be lovely to look at. It is true that in among the trees were occasional rocky knolls on which I was told mouflon were often found, but the differences between my imaginings and the reality were great.

Through aisle-like rides we did our 'pirschfahrt' for some time without incident, and I thanked my stars that I had brought a heavy overcoat. It was cold and inclined to drizzle, and in the back seat of the 'machine' I cowered beside the Diplomat, endeavouring to keep warm. Then the driver, a lad of parts, pointed with his whip and exclaimed, "Schaf!" In the gloom of the trees I could see nothing, but the Diplomat, after a look through his glasses, said, "Ordinary sheep, not 'muffles.'" The latter is the term by which mouflon are always called in Germany, and very catching it is. I do not to this day know whether he was right or not, but by degrees I made out several pale ghost-like faces peering out from behind tree-trunks. Almost at once they vanished. We drove on. The next excitement was the sight of a stag, an 11-pointer with good brows but in no other way remarkable, who gazed at us from the edge of a ride and then disappeared into the wood. The deer in the Hartz are not particularly good, though they are improving both in heads and bodies. Half an hour later we came across more 'muffles.' There was no doubt about them this time, though according to the Forstmeister they were all ewes. They watched us, when a roe suddenly dashing out of the thicket put them off.

I began to feel a little depressed. The day was turning to a wet misty afternoon. The wood was gloomy, and I was not feeling too happy about my shooting. I found it, as I always do in a bad light, shut in as we were by trees, extraordinarily difficult to see. In a sneaking subconscious sort of way I had the sensation that this driving about in a carriage-and-pair was not quite fair on the 'muffles.'

I felt that to be on equal terms with them the entourage by which I was accompanied ought to be rather more piratical in appearance, and that there should be a prospect of some hard work. Bronzed mountaineers with long moustaches, rope sandals, dirty but picturesque clothes and belts bristling with weapons, who would not be above taking a pot-shot at others similarly attired on the neighbouring hill-top, would, I felt, be more in keeping with the atmosphere which my imaginings had built up about a 'muffle.' Instead, my glance showed me the Diplomat, a very smart fur collar surmounting his heavy overcoat, a

jaunty green hat cocked rakishly over one eye, and the spruce and severe Forstmeister. Even the driver had a better overcoat than mine! However, there we were and it was no use cavilling. I only hoped that if I did get a shot I should not repeat my Schorfheide performance.

About three o'clock the next 'muffles' appeared, this time with a ram. The Forstmeister anxiously scanned them with his Zeiss. Yes, the ram was a good one. A muttered colloquy in German with the Diplomat. Did I think, he enquired, that the ram was good enough? Never previously having seen a mouflon ram in the flesh, I modestly replied that he was a better judge than I. There were, perhaps, three better rams in the Hartz. This was a good representative head. It was getting dark and I very cold. I agreed to pursue it. We drove on, turned down a bisecting ride at right angles, saw the ram walk over a knoll and disappear. The ewes followed. They were not frightened. If, said the Forstmeister, I thought it good enough to shoot, would I kindly descend, walk up to the knoll and do my stuff? This reliance on my, *my* judgment was beginning to influence me. Was the ram so good, after all? I debated this as I walked up to the knoll.

Some of the ewes were to be seen walking into the wood on my right. The ram was not with them. Then I saw him, thirty yards off, watching before moving slowly away, stern on. Certainly he looked pretty big, but back views, as we all know, are very deceptive. I made a mental note to aim low and, not knowing much about telescopic sights, wondered if he was too close. He potted on while I dodged from tree to tree, occasionally, when I had a chance, trying to get a clear view of him through the sight. I could not make up my mind, one, whether he carried a head which I, subsequently, should be pleased to possess; and, two, whether I should hit him if I fired. Such a state of mind is, as every stalker knows, hopeless. My doubts were settled without action on my part by a low drone, of which I had been conscious for some time, suddenly developing into a shattering roar. An aeroplane shot over the tree-tops, and the 'muffles,' to my secret relief, vanished. Rejoining my companions, I made unconvincing explana-

tions which were duly translated, and we continued our drive. Beyond the edge of a bank across the ride, before we had been driving for ten minutes, I saw something move and gave an exclamation. We stopped. More 'muffles,' I thought at first, so close were we to the scene of our late adventure that they must be the ones we had just left, or rather which had just left us. The driver, however, who seemed to be a bit of an expert, maintained that they were a different lot and contained a ram with a head far superior. They moved slowly on and we followed. Crossing the ride in front of us, they strung slowly out among the trees. Said the Diplomat, "The Forstmeister will tell you where you get off!"

Pondering the familiarity of this phrase, I got off without waiting to be told, and lumbered, half-numbered, behind a tree, which, at any rate, gave some cover. I saw no ram and scrambled to the next tree. I had no doubts this time as to whether I ought to shoot or not. Even without a glass I had seen that he carried a much better head than that which I had formerly pursued. 'Stalked' would be too flattering a term. Then I saw him as he stopped to look back. The cross-lines with the little pointer between were on his shoulder, and I set the hair-trigger with which all Continental rifles are fitted. Then he moved forward, and as he did so the cartridge exploded!

I should be very sorry to have to say on oath that I meant it to at that exact moment. I was quite certain I had missed, and, as he kept on, made a gesture of impotent rage. Following, I heard a cry and looked back. My smart companions, gesticulating wildly, were scrambling out of the cart. The Diplomat yelled, "He's down!" The Forstmeister waved. Turning, I saw a dim form beneath a tree. When we got up to him he was quite dead, and I pretended that my gesture had been one of joy! I was not quite sure from the look in the Diplomat's eye whether he was convinced. The bullet had raked right forward, passing through the heart, but, pleased though I was to have a good head of this splendid little sheep, I could not honestly feel that I had fairly earned it.

The pursuit of the chamois is, as I have already stated, very different to that of either the stag or the mouflon so

far as my own experience leads me to suppose. He is small, not much bigger than a roe, though his thick coat and stocky build make him look larger; he is not easy to stalk, being extremely alert and quick-sighted; he inhabits rough and mountainous country necessitating a good deal of hard work and climbing often under trying conditions, and to secure a good head is not easy. It was the Diplomat who was responsible, and he deserves greater elucidation. I had first met him, as I have said, in the early stages of my visit to Berlin. Subsequently I found myself next to him at a luncheon-party. It was a very smart party. Ambassadors jostled excellencies; princesses, metaphorically, rubbed shoulders with countesses. Ladies being in a minority, I had found myself stranded with the male sediment at the far end of the table and could only gaze at these exciting creatures from a distance. The Diplomat enlightened me as to their identities. Of one old gentleman, rather the worse for wear, he disclaimed all knowledge, but added, "If he'd been a stag he'd have been shot long ago!" This led to talk of sport, and he enquired what particular kind of stalking I preferred. I expressed a liking for small mountain game with heads large in proportion to their bodies, such as some of the smaller sheep and goats. "So do I," said he. "I hate felling great lumps of meat!" His eyes had a hint of laughter and his easy, quizzical glance bespoke a sense of humour.

"Have you done any chamois-shooting?" he went on.

I told him I had only shot one.

"You'd better come and have another go at them next month," said he.

Thus, early in December, subsequent to our adventure with the 'muffles,' I joined him in a sleeper at the railway station in Berlin.

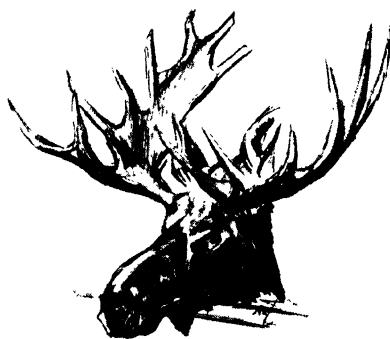
I must confess that my first feeling as the train drew out into snow-covered country was one of disappointment. I had seen the document myself in the Diplomat's portfolio, an enormous envelope, heavily sealed and inscribed in large and clear writing, "Very secret," "By safe hand." It had thrilled me to the core! Now, thought I, if ever, they will appear, those exciting creatures I had met in spy stories, headed by the lovely lady with violet eyes whose

svelte figure and slinky walk would at once give her away, even without the alluring perfume which would first render me aware of her presence. I felt quite capable of being able to deal with the sinister and bearded men who, I felt sure, would be hovering unobtrusively in the background. Of my willingness to sit up and watch the corridor whilst he retired to his bunk I had assured the Diplomat. To my secret chagrin, he had vetoed such a course as unnecessary. He, however, had been proved right, for we reached Munich, white under a sprinkling of snow, after a night's journey completely without adventure. Still, it was all an adventure to me.

After seeing the Brown House and as much of Munich as we could fit in in the morning, we took train after lunch for Garmisch and Scharnitz. Late in the afternoon the sight of roe standing in the blue snow-shadows by the side of the line delighted me.

At Scharnitz, known to the Romans as Porta Claudia, we were met by Wragg, the jäger, picturesque with long brown beard and moustache, big stag-horn buttons on the inevitable green coat, and a weather-worn chamois 'bart' in his battered hat. Both he and 'young Albert, his son' had the perfect, natural manners of unspoiled mountaineers. I wonder what has been their fate? A couple of hours' drive through woods, ghostly in the darkness with snow-laden branches, brought us to the hut at Karvendal Thal. The estate is still owned by the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, under whose care the game, both deer and chamois, has improved.

The pursuit of a mountain animal is superior to that of any which can be found in the low country, with the exception of roe-stalking, and when he is so small a beast as a chamois and one so supremely able to look after himself, all one's powers are called into play in the effort to circumvent him. I had only stalked in September, which is a very different thing from doing so in the winter in deep snow, which now lay to a depth of 18 inches on the lower slopes and was up to one's thighs on the high ground. The hut itself was about 4000 feet above sea-level. Progress was slow, and once as we ploughed through deep drifts the Diplomat, who was in front, turned to me



THE GREAT MORITZBURG HEAD, AND OTHER SKETCHES

Points, 12—11; Weight,  $41\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.; Length,  $47\frac{1}{2}$  ins.; Beam,  $12\frac{1}{4}$  ins.; Span,  $75\frac{1}{2}$





and said, "Ski-ing is about eight times worse hell than this!" It put me off any desire to ski.

In the fir scrub, which grows up to 6500 feet or so, chamois are found, but usually females and young ones, the best bucks keeping to the high ground, which in Karvendal rose to 9000 feet. On the other side of the southern ridge lies Innsbrück. There is much limestone in these hills, and the heads of the chamois here are consequently as good as any in Austria. (My visit was three months before the 'Anschluss.') It is a golden rule when contemplating the pursuit of any horned quarry to search for it on limestone formation.

When after a beast which one does not know, it is always a difficult matter to judge heads correctly. The smaller the head the more difficult does such a task become, and in the case of chamois it is particularly hard as an inch or less may make all the difference in the status of a trophy. Never making any pretence at being able to estimate a head, I left it entirely to Wragg. From him I picked up one or two useful pieces of information. The horns of a young buck thicken irregularly and the points are thin. The horns of an old buck are thick for a third of their length and then become thin. The hair on the stomach is also an indication of age, becoming in the case of an old buck darker, as it does also on the chest, while that on a young buck is light in colour.

It is important to kill the old barren does which have never had a kid, for they remain in season late and keep the bucks in a state of excitement after the regular rut is over, giving them no time to recover their strength before the hard weather sets in. I think chamois live to about the same age as deer. Wragg told me he had once killed a doe of twenty. They breed at the age of three and continue to have young up to ten years of age. A buck is at his best from eight to eleven years of age. The proportion of bucks to does at Karvendal was about one to five, which is approximately correct.

The usual charge for shooting an old doe is roughly 30s.; a buck will cost £10.

Apart from the head, the chamois carries another trophy, of a kind carried by no other animal that I can recollect,

which is prized equally by Continental sportsmen. This is the beard or 'bart.' A really good one fetches a big price. It consists of the hairs growing along the top of the rump and withers, which, to be first class, should be white-tipped. These hairs are carefully removed and wrapped in paper, which is then laid between two flat pieces of wood to keep their shape. They are then graded and tied in small bunches. From these the finished article, worn in the back of the hat, is made. The best are grown when the buck is from six to eight years old, after which they become shorter.

Chamois vary considerably in weight, the average good buck being about 60 lb., the weight of a very good Scottish roebuck ungralloched. The heaviest recorded at Karvendal, weighed clean, without the head, was 74 lb., which is very unusual.

Much the most amusing time to stalk chamois is during the rut, from mid-November to mid-December. The bucks at this time do all sorts of unexpected things. They will cross from the tops of one ridge down into the valley and up 9000 feet on the opposite side in search of does, and old jägers say that until they have done this the rut has not really started. It is most entertaining to watch bucks charging each other, just as stags do, but with more apparent vigour. After a shot, too, it was amusing to see little black dots, bearing for some unexplained reason an extraordinary resemblance to the black caterpillars one finds on a Scottish moor, scurrying for the tops. Every beast in sight would vanish, and then, suddenly, on each sharp-pointed peak would appear a little black head with pointed ears surveying the hillside below them. It always made me laugh, for the chamois is a most engaging little animal, of whom I grew very fond.

Owing to weather bad for stalking, the chamois on our arrival were very scattered, and many were still in the scrub at the bottom of the valley when they should normally have all been collected in the corries at the tops of the hills. The big bucks do not wander much at this season when they have collected some does, though travellers move for great distances. Wragg, who had been the jäger at Karvendal for twenty-four years, said he had never seen

them so sluggish in search of does. The Diplomat killed a fair buck on our first day's stalking, and I missed one on the following morning. Having reached the top of the timber line, we were confronted by a series of rocky tops which might have been a part of some remote Scottish glen.

After marching and counter-marching, from below a steep face of rock high above us, flecked with ridges of snow, appeared a small black speck. Wragg declared it to be the head of a good chamois. Dutifully balancing the rifle on two crossed alpenstocks as he directed, I did indeed see an occasional flash of a chamois as my telescopic sight swayed backwards and forwards. Steadying it to the best of my ability, I felt no surprise when the bullet struck the rock three hundred yards away, immediately below the buck. It was a pity, as he was a good beast and we never saw him again. However, it had been a pleasant day, warm out of the wind, with blinks of sunshine and wonderful cobalts and madders in the far distance of Vorarlberg, where, eight years before, I killed my only chamois. In "Big Game" I have given an account of his end.

It was on December 2nd that I retrieved my miss. We left the hut at 7.15 and toiled through the snow to the head of the valley. Before reaching it we saw some beasts across the river which flowed below. Then, as we started to climb the hill which led to a house, only occupied during the summer months, perched on the edge of the cliff, Wragg spotted a buck at the very top of the ridge on the south side. We stopped at a bend in the road and for a long time Wragg watched him, dragging out a ridiculous-looking little telescope with about nine pulls, which he kept secreted for emergencies in the depths of his clothing. In addition he carried binoculars, but the appearance of the telescope meant that something serious was on foot. I got a bit bored after about ten minutes, and said to the Diplomat, "It's extraordinary how all stalkers love watching beasts and wasting time. There isn't a hope of getting at that buck, even if he's any good!"

"Wait a bit," said he; "I think he's got some scheme."

We accordingly waited, I curbing my impatience and Wragg peering through his telescope. Then to my amaze-

ment the buck started to descend the hillside. Remember he was at least 2500 feet above us. It was no casual descent with a stop for a nibble or a loiter on a ledge, but a purposeful Odyssey. He came steadily on, occasionally disappearing from sight, but always getting nearer. From 8000 feet he came to 7000 feet, and from 7000 feet to 6000 feet. Wragg motioned me to fix the telescopic sight. From 6000 feet he came to 5000 feet, where he was opposite us, across a wide gorge, on the edge of some scattered bushes and trees, a wall of rock behind him. "Two hundred!" said Wragg, but I remembered yesterday's miss, and determined to rely on my own judgment. I thought it was nearer three. A bundle of coats gave some support, and a St. Andrew's cross of alpenstocks steadied the rifle. At the shot he took a step or two forward, then stood, head down, and I knew he was hit. Then he lay down. He looked very small, and I tried several more shots without any effect, for it was impossible to tell in the snow where they had gone. But he lay still.

It took us nearly an hour to work round the top of the glen, make our way along a precipitous slope above the river with some very nasty corners, where a slip would have meant a fifty-foot drop into icy water, and reach the spot where he lay, quite dead.

His head was far better than I had expected, just in the gold medal class in an international show. The 'bart' was moderate, but it was something to have one at all, and I felt very contented and satisfied as I watched Wragg carefully removing it bit by bit.

"This," said I to the Diplomat, "is better than doing a 'pirschfahrt'!"

"That," replied he sententiously, "is more suited to the appearance lent you by your white hairs than to your hidden supplies of energy!" I felt still more contented.

The differences in approach to the red deer, the mouflon and the chamois will, I hope, have become apparent. The term 'stalking' can in truth be applied only to the latter animal, and as most sportsmen will agree, this is the true method by which the approach to any game should be attempted. 'Moving' may be permissible at times when conditions are such that stalking is precluded, and is much



MOUFLON IN SNOW



more frequently practised abroad than in this country. There is, too, another means of securing a shot which I had never employed, though it is common in other countries with certain species. This is 'calling.' Red deer and roe can be 'called' during the rut, and artificial calls can be purchased by which the voice of the stag or buck can be imitated. I have heard the roar of a stag imitated through a lamp-glass most realistically, and Pali Palffy told me he could call up a stag in the Carpathians at a great distance provided climatic conditions were favourable. In thickly wooded country such as this, 'calling' may be the only method by which any results can be achieved.

I had never had an opportunity of practising this form of sport and was more than delighted when an opportunity presented itself.

Shortly after my return from Berlin I was asked to go to Paris to act as judge in an exhibition of trophies which was being held there. One of my fellow-judges was Count Jaroslaw Potocki, who owned extensive estates in Poland where elk were preserved. He asked me to visit him there.

The European elk or moose, though smaller than his gigantic Alaskan cousin, is yet, with the exception of the European bison (though the latter can hardly be included in the category), the largest game animal in Europe. At first sight he gives the impression, which closer acquaintance does nothing to dispel, of being a survivor from an earlier and more remote age. His indefinable aspect of brooding melancholy seems due to the recollection of such a time when he, in the dim red dawn of man, moved freely, a giant among giants, and did not yet figure, their sole lonely representative, in a straitened world of pygmies. He is a prehistoric anachronism.

A big bull will weigh between sixty and seventy stone, and a good head may carry twenty points or more with a span of forty-five to over fifty inches. There are two distinct types, the normal palmated head or the 'spiky' variety with little or no palmation. The latter is regarded in Germany, and I think rightly, as a degenerate form, and every effort is made to get rid of such heads. I cannot believe that the so-called Siberian Elk is anything but a poor form of the ordinary race. Elk are found in Norway,



Sweden, Germany and Poland, the majority of the best heads coming from the latter country. A new European record with a span of 53½ inches was killed there in 1938 in one of the State forests.

I had never had any inordinate ambition to kill one of these great animals, but Jaroslaw's kind invitation was too good to be missed, and one day in August 1938 found me in Warsaw. A fellow-guest was Raymond, a French sportsman, who kept us in fits of laughter for the whole of my visit. He had arrived a day or two before me, and it was not until long after that I learned that it had been his wish to greet my arrival with a red carpet, a band, and a bevy of young ladies throwing flowers. I was to be wafted to the hotel in a car, the band playing in advance. Jaroslaw dissuaded him from these pleasantries only by telling him that he would inevitably find himself in gaol did he attempt to carry them out. The evening after our departure from Warsaw found us installed in a log hut on the edge of a vast forest composed for the most part of birch, fir and alder, with a sprinkling of oak and ash. It was close to a large lake, to which ran rivers and canals, so that much of our travelling was done by water.

Elk-hunting in Poland is a highly specialised form of sport, which to me was all the more interesting as I had never before 'called' an animal. Not that I did. 'Calling' is not learned in a day, and requires natural aptitude as well as a great deal of practice. In addition to many other kindnesses, I have to thank my host for giving me not only his best gillie, Ro-man, but his best 'caller,' Alexei, during the whole of my stay. Alexei, though an ordinary peasant, was an extremely intelligent, pleasant man, and probably as good a caller as could be found in Poland. The fidelity with which he imitated a cow and, which is much more difficult, a bull, was only to be appreciated when one heard the real animal. From the hut we made frequent camps, usually reaching them by boat, and thereby gaining two or three hours' more sleep. It is necessary to be on the ground at daybreak. From about 4 to 6 a.m. is the best period of the morning call, the evening one only lasting from 5.30 to 6.30 p.m.

There is one advantage in elk-hunting: except when

actually calling you can make as much noise as you like! There are several drawbacks. You will ask yourself with passionate reiteration why the Almighty considered it necessary to create either clegs or mosquitoes; you will have to plunge in the dark through jungles of nettles seven or eight feet high which bite like tigers; you will have to wear waders, which are very hot for the 'footing' as Raymond called it, or be drenched to the skin by the heavy dew; you will very seldom see a living thing; and, lastly, though a big bull may be standing within ten yards of you, you will not know until you get a poke in the kidneys from your gillie whether you are to shoot or not. The hunter goes to a place where he thinks an elk will be, either from seeing tracks or by broken trees and branches. The caller, then, through his birch-bark trumpet, gives a sharp "Woof!"

If you have ever failed, invariably at the time when you most wanted one, to obtain a hot bath, you have probably, in a few courteous words, requested (reserving the expression of your real feelings for a greater privacy) the domestic in charge of such mundane matters to give them her attention. This, if your hot-water system is of the kind that runs itself, may result in a furious stoking-up before the domestic retires to the richly earned rest which unremitting attention to the wants of those who are so fortunate as to employ her entitles her. Subsequent to this a subdued rumble from the direction of the tank has at times awakened me in the middle of the night. Low at first, it increases in volume to the intensity of a particularly menacing thunderstorm. In acute fear that the boiler will blow up, shoot through the roof and descend on my head, I have, on such occasions, reluctantly dragged myself to the bathroom as providing the nearest and most efficient form of relief. Turning on the hot-water tap, a low hissing is the first result, which gradually and intermittently increases in volume. The next manifestation is a loud snort. This is exactly the sound produced by the caller when imitating the cow. Should this produce no answer he will repeat it, and then, after an interval, the call of the bull, which is best denoted by the monosyllable "Ugh!"

A perfectly still morning with a touch of frost provides the best conditions. The call can then be heard for a great

distance. A high wind or even a breeze, the patter of rain on the leaves, or even mist, not only prevents the sound from carrying but renders the answer, if there is one, inaudible.

The call is varied by the caller selecting a sapling or broken branch, and with this thrashing a dead tree or bushes to imitate the sound made by the bull rubbing his horns.

After the call it is necessary to remain absolutely still. I could not at first grasp the reason why my companions pointedly walked away from me and stood at a distance on such occasions. I thought I must be suffering from some fell disease. You know. Why was Jones, who was so nice and so good-looking, shunned by all the girls at every dance he went to? Well, it wasn't that at all, but simply that I had not grasped the necessity for absolute immobility. A slight movement of the feet, even breathing, was irritating to those whose every nerve was strained to catch the faintest hint of a reply. (Incidentally, I heard the breathing of one bull which came to the call quite plainly twenty yards off.) I worked hard early and late for a fortnight before I saw a bull, and another four days before I got a shot.

The first time that a call is answered is very exciting even to experienced hunters. It may be the bull of which he has dreamed, or only a small one! I found it impossible to tell from what distance the answer came. It might have been two hundred yards or half a mile. I heard half a dozen or more after that first one, and on me they all made the same impression. "Ugh! Ugh!"—very faint at first, gradually getting louder. The sound reminded me of the protest made by a well-fed and lethargic old gentleman roused from a snooze after a good lunch in his favourite club, who had reluctantly forced himself to perform a duty which bored him to the very core.

The best bull I got was late in the afternoon. The call was answered almost at once. The sound came nearer, then ceased. Alexei called again. There was no answer. He broke down a sapling and thrashed a dead tree. The sound was duplicated. He called again. This time there was an answer. We moved forward. The sound ceased. Alexei cocked his head on one side and listened. He called

again. There came an answer, but farther off. Quickly and silently we followed Alexei for a couple of hundred yards in the direction of the sound. He called again, making the call of the bull. This time the answer was nearer. I was hustled behind a bush with Ro-man close behind. Alexei retreated slowly and silently to a thicket twenty yards to one side. The answer came closer. Ro-man motioned with his arm. Alexei moved to the other side and called again, this time with his trumpet almost touching the ground. "Ugh! Ugh!" came from the forest in front of me. Then there was a terrific crashing and breaking of branches. Another pause. I thought I saw something move in front of me. "Ugh! Ugh!" Something did move, and it was terribly close. I saw a black patch behind a bush not fifteen yards in front of me; then I felt a poke in the ribs from Ro-man. A piece of red horn moved behind a tree, and it was palmated. The next thing I remember was Ro-man suddenly rushing out into the open, shouting and yelling. Alexei, with his attractive smile, came forward and shook me by the hand. Ro-man rushed back from where he had been stooping in the bushes, his arms outstretched, yelling to Alexei. Then he flew at me and covered my hand with kisses, and I knew that I had killed my first elk.

Poor Raymond was not so fortunate. He nearly always went to the same locality. He said the mosquitoes knew him there, and because they were so gorged with his blood they wouldn't bite him any more. Having lost his dinner, broken the sight of his rifle, had a fall and smashed his Zeiss glasses, he concluded that his ill luck had finished. Fate had one final blow for him. Only one elk did he see, and that very indistinctly. He had a shot, and cut a piece of hair from its withers.

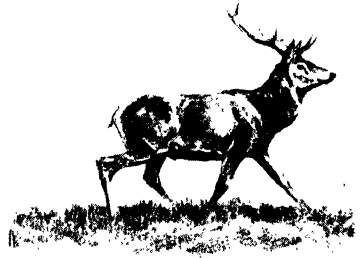
Next day he took me to our sleeping-quarters and led me to his bed. On one of the logs above it I read the following epitaph:

ICI  
coucha R.  
qui le 2.9.38  
RATA  
un elan.

I hope one day to write again about Raymond, who was a very gallant sportsman and I hope has survived. Among other things, he had killed over a hundred wild boars by stabbing them with a hunting-knife.

Although, as I have said, there is but little wild life to distract one's attention when hunting elk, beavers, which are very strictly preserved, are not uncommon. That I never saw one was due more to bad luck than anything else, as I heard them splash into the river close to me on several occasions. I found a fox's earth and saw wild boar. Storks were common at the time of our arrival, and it was pleasant to hear the cranes in the early morning, the woodpeckers tapping industriously, and to see as well as hear the great horned owls, which were common. Buzzards and eagles, too, were frequent.

Once, in the early dawn before it was light, as we made our way along the bank of a stream there was a commotion in the water, and Ro-man dashed in, hit at something with a stick, and came back with a dead otter. Hunting about in the darkness he found another, which he carried home tied in the sleeve of his coat. For two days it lived in a wooden box, and then, I am glad to say, escaped, for I never come into contact with otters without thinking of Portly and hearing again a lovely voice reading "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn."



STUDIES OF DEER



## XVI

### *SOME MEMORIES OF THE HILL*

“Come back to the Glen.”

Pipe Tune.

I HAD no intention when I started to write the foregoing chapters of including anything about stalking. I have written so much about sport that I wanted a change, but my friend, as well as publisher, Mr. Douglas Jerrold, tells me that those who do me the honour of reading these pages will expect some talk of what has been to me of such absorbing interest and happiness. His advice cannot be neglected, so I will chance it!

I have just been rereading the “Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man” with its vivid and delightful descriptions of a boy’s first experiences in the hunting-field. They have stirred in my memory recollections of my own early stalks, though I should receive with reluctance the information that anyone had drawn comparisons between Mr. Sassoon’s account of his first day’s hunting and my own early experiences on the hill. I should be toiling laboriously many fields—or hills—behind. In another volume is a description of the manner in which I killed my first stag. I could wish that I had Mr. Sassoon’s memory for detail. The colour of the clothes I wore escapes me. That they were of a demure tone, probably Lovat, is certain. That the knickerbockers (plus fours had not then been invented) and coat did not match is also beyond dispute; for in such particularity of detail I revelled with boyish enthusiasm. Another certainty would be my headgear, an old-fashioned deerstalker with flaps. The favourite head covering of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the latter could be tied under the chin in snow, or as a protection against the cold blasts of winter. Seldom did such contingencies become imperative, and seldom now are the modern equivalents of such caps made. They were heavy, but those of later style, without flaps, but with peaks fore and aft, which



can be folded and put in the pocket when not in use, are far and away the best headgear of any for the hill. They will not blow off in a wind, unless a gale from behind, shield the eyes and neck, and are comfortable to wear. They were, I believe, at one time suggested for regulation army use but were not adopted.

I suppose that a hunting man could recall many years later every landmark and incident of his first run, point out every hedge and brook he jumped, every gate and meadow he passed, provided that such features of the landscape had not materially changed. I, too, for many years could make an equal claim. Alas! no longer can I do so. In place of the rough, heather-clad hillside on which died my first shabby 8-pointer, instead of the lovely wood beneath whose tender whisperings I lurked at the heels of MacMillan, that dour Elder of the Kirk, now stand, straight and symmetrical, rows of fir trees. From these emerge, gaunt and poignant, the stark skeletons of the butchered birches. No longer can the deer seek the shelter even such afford, for along their whole length stretches a wire fence which would successfully defeat the encroachments of anything less formidable than a herd of elephants. Rarely as I pass up and down the glen do I lift my eyes to a spot once sacred. Too many ghosts haunt my memories.

Yet the emotions evoked by the recollections of that first day's stalking, which, as my dear old friend Patrick Chalmers once wrote, "made me a freeman of the hill," still persist; for whenever I set foot on it crowd back other memories which have been accumulating for nearly fifty years.

Many of those with whom I used to share such joys have gone, nor will those who come after see the hill, threatened by so many changes, as I knew it when a boy. Detailed lists of the slain, itemised holocausts of liquidated game, are tedious and seldom interesting. The value of such lie only in the fact that they are available for purposes of comparison in given localities. Game may either have increased or diminished, and the reasons for its augmentation or failure may possibly be computed from such records.

There is a modern tendency in many quarters to abuse

sport. I do not mean games, but, to distinguish it from the latter, what are known by the horrible term 'blood sports.' When I was young, sport was sport and games were games. Now, unless particularised, they appear to be indistinguishable. I share with my friends a strong predilection for the former.

It is difficult in these days to escape from events which colour all our thoughts or from the bearing which these have on our lives. I was walking quite recently with Lord Lovat along the lovely banks of the River Beaulieu. I asked him if he had found that his experience as a stalker had helped him so far as his war duties were concerned. "I can't begin to tell you what it has meant," said he, and went on to illustrate what was in his mind by this answer. I have just had a letter from my son, who is now an ensign. He had been engaged in a battle course and wrote that owing to his hill experience he was not only in perfect physical condition, but that when exhausted and weary instead of giving way to a natural tendency to gaze stolidly at the nails in his companions' boots he could still keep his attention fixed "not, alas! for deer, but for anything that might move. This, I am glad to say, became remarked, and eventually praised, since as a scout I spotted the enemy before being fired on." Certain I am that knowledge gained on the hill has saved many a life in this war.

Another stalking friend to whom I talked had been training troops in mountain warfare. He said that to a hill-man who was accustomed to finding his way in unknown country, noting his 'marks' almost unconsciously, and the general lie of the land, the mistakes made by men brought up in towns and ignorant of country matters were almost unbelievable. It was not their fault. They had to learn. He took a section of men up on the hill and pointed out a knoll on the edge of a burn.

"Now," said he, "take a good look at it; note its shape, the rocks near by and any other features which you think will help you to identify it."

The class looked.

"Can you now," he went on, "having had a good look at it, recognise it again from a different angle?"

"Do you take us for d— fools?" asked one of his pupils.

"Well, quite frankly I do," said the instructor with a smile.

"Not recognise that!" said another. "Try us!"

"Just what I'm going to do," said my friend. He took them out of sight of the knoll and came in from another direction some distance off.

"Now point out what you were looking at before," he ordered.

Not one of them could do so. Perhaps there is something to be said for sport after all.

The most poignant sensation haunting one in those far-off days when we first 'took the hill' was the fear of disgrace through missing. It would be even worse than not having a shot at all! The awful feeling overwhelming any unfortunate so unlucky when contemplating the different aspect existence would have borne had he only aimed a trifle lower (nine misses out of ten are high) can scarcely be described! The rapture ere falling asleep on the night when dreams had been accomplished, the smug feeling of satisfaction, clothing one as with a garment at the realisation that there was a stag, your very own, dead in the larder, still linger in the memory of the older generation.

With increasing years such feelings have not quite the same intensity; experience gives confidence. It also enables us to formulate our excuses for untoward contretemps with a greater verisimilitude, though after all it is not to be expected that every stag aimed at should be killed—unless the raconteur is a first-class liar!

I remember the awe with which I regarded the heroes of my favourite sport whose magnificent progress crossed at times my humble path. A surreptitious glance at the labels on their highly polished brown leather gun and rifle cases usually revealed their identity. Now they are, the majority of them, in the happy hunting-grounds, unwitting of the modern long canvas-covered cases then unknown. Present-day rifles, of course, are never 'taken down' as were the old double-barrelled breech-loaders. Hence their length.

Later, when I ceased to be a schoolboy and went up to Oxford, my autumn holiday could be extended until

October, and a study of the horns of many fine stags as they took their last journey by steamer down Loch Ness was no infrequent event. Secretly and passionately I wondered if ever anything approaching such monsters would fall to my lot.

Now, forty-five years later, I count my benefits, humbly and gratefully, not least the fact that I have stalked in over forty forests, in some only for an odd day or two, in others for longer periods, even year after year. I mention this in no spirit of boasting, which is far from my thoughts, but because it seems unlikely as I write that in fifty years' time anyone will be in a position to make a similar statement, for the simple reason that the number of forests will be much reduced.

When the craze for stalking was at its height many good grouse moors, which ought to have remained grouse moors only, were thrown open to deer, which indeed were encouraged to take up new quarters with an overwhelming abandon on the part of their prospective hosts. Much of such ground was not deer ground at all and ought not to have been occupied by deer. Their numbers increased by leaps and bounds, as I have already mentioned, and they became far too numerous.

The aim of the future should be to confine a reasonable stock of deer to such ground, unsuited to other purposes, where they properly belong and to educate public opinion to an appreciation of really good heads. Only so can the real traditions of stalking flourish and be maintained.

There is much speculation now as to the future of sport generally. Fishings and shootings can be run as clubs or syndicates, but to maintain a deer forest on such lines presents many difficulties. There may be an increase in the number of sporting hotels in the Highlands. Whether such will actually materialise remains to be seen. One of their advantages is, no doubt, that the prospective patron will know exactly his commitments and will be saved the bother of dealing with a domestic staff—if such is ever again available—and the running of a lodge. Before, however, embarking on such a holiday a careful study of the conditions would be advisable.

There are many fishing hotels in Scotland, though most

have suffered owing to this war. Often these used to advertise "Free fishing." The innocent and inexperienced victim of such, intent on a holiday amid beautiful surroundings, pictured himself floating placidly in a boat on some hill-girt loch, free from responsibilities and cares, surrounded by baskets of large pink-fleshed trout. The sun shone and all was right with the world. In reality there were differences. Such hotels are run by admirable gentlemen whose characteristics vary. There is the meek nonentity who lurks unobtrusively in the background, the whole establishment hinging on some dominant female who bossés, often extremely efficiently, not only the whole outfit but the guests themselves. They can scarcely sneeze without her permission. Then there is the genial individual, also efficient, who acts as adviser and friend and, aided by a charming manner, makes a very good thing out of it for four months in the year. He is usually a sportsman himself, a good fisherman and shot, and regards his four months' harvest as a means of enjoying his own sport for the remainder of the year.

The dour disciplinarian remains in seclusion in his own quarters, occasionally gives advice to favoured habitués, concealing an iron hand within the velvet glove. It is only when a suggestion out of the ordinary routine arises that the former becomes apparent. The guest who has been bold enough to attempt to alter existing conditions then suddenly finds himself in the position of a small boy summoned to the sanctum of the headmaster.

The 'free' fishing in any case turns out something of a fallacy. The guest finds that Loch Muchra, admittedly the best in the locality, only turns up on the roster once in every ten days, and that the fishing fraternity who have dug themselves in previously somehow or other manage to get there whenever they want. The newcomer is relegated to Loch Aslich, where the trout are notoriously stiff and concerning whose habits the young gillie who falls to his lot knows absolutely nothing. The newcomer's feelings on returning in the evening, when the day's catch is exhibited on plates in the lobby for the delectation of the guests, and to which his contribution is a small, muddy-looking fish weighing about  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. compared with the fifteen

or twenty 1 lb. to 2 lb. pink-fleshed monsters extracted by Colonel Bilberry Blimp, are better imagined than described.

In any case, he has had to pay for a car to take him to the loch allotted and back, a boat for the day, his gillie, this gentleman's lunch as well as his own; and the question inevitably intrudes itself on his mind as to where the freedom enters.

Such stalking as might be provided by a 'stalking' hotel could not in any case be cheap, and I do not suppose that any such hotel would have the effrontery to advertise 'free' stalking. It would, however, be cheaper than renting a forest. The guest at such an hotel would have to get to his beat. He would be saddled with a pony, a stalker, one or two gillies, lunches for the lot and tips. All this would represent a considerable financial outlay. The object, naturally, of the hotel proprietor would be to make as good a thing out of it as possible, more particularly as the season should only last for a couple of months at the outside, and actually would probably extend to a month or less.

Such an establishment would be unlikely to provide more than two beats and might be of no use to anyone who knew the game except in October. The tyro's annoyance if he discovered that Colonel Blimp was habitually on the only beat where there was a chance of a good stag while he investigated the flats at the far end of the ground and returned with nothing or a small 6-pointer, while the gallant colonel proudly displayed a royal of sorts, would be even greater than the feelings aroused by a comparison of their respective baskets of fish.

In any case, and this is the point, it would pay the proprietor of the hotel much better to have a large number of indifferent stags on the ground, young or old, than a limited number of good heads. He would, in fact, be tempted to encourage rubbish, and such a state of affairs should not be allowed to come about, as it would inevitably lead to trouble.

We of my generation live in an age of changes unparalleled, and into what these may develop in the future no one can predict. Certain it is, however, that

they will leave nothing unaltered, sport as we knew it included.

The old sportsmen, not so very long ago, of whose doings it intrigues me to learn, who shot snipe where now stands Belgrave Square, may at moments have fleetingly conjectured on the alterations which time would bring. They may even have visualised the possibility of lordly mansions rising on the spot from which their latest victim had zig-zagged in erratic flight. Similarly, I wonder what transformations, hidden in the womb of time, may befall the hills and glens, long secure in unspoiled loveliness, which I have so often traversed in pursuit of red deer and roe. Their beauty may be marred. The Highlands may become industrialised. Such may be right and proper, and a part of that progress for which great and wise men strive. That the chief result of modern progress after nearly two thousand years appears to consist in a display of the ingenuity with which mankind devises an increasing number of still deadlier methods for its own destruction, may perhaps furnish conclusive arguments for those "*laudatores temporis acti*" who still survive. Be that as it may, to while away an idle hour reconstructing the manners and occupations of their forefathers is a pastime for which the old may be forgiven. Such may be regarded with a smile of amused tolerance by a young and progressive generation, who in turn, may I be pardoned for uttering a reminder, will furnish an equally transitory target to those by whom they are succeeded.

It is in no spirit of smug complacence that I recall some of the incidents of my career as a stalker, but in the hope that those who are now young may pick from them something with which to compare their own experiences.

My first invitation for a proper stalking visit, not just an odd day snatched from the maw of fate, must have come somewhere about the early days of this century when, alas! I had already left Scotland to pursue my studies at Oxford. I still recollect the fury with which I received the intimation that it had missed me by a few hours. I should certainly have arranged, somehow or other, to postpone my departure. As it was, my brother benefited, went to Struy, then one of the best all-round places in the North,

and, I fancy, killed his first stag. Douglas Barry was the tenant, and here in a good season could be killed sixty stags, five or six hundred brace of grouse and over a hundred fish. Inchrory, now owned by Colonel Oliver Haig and tenanted for some years before this war by Sir Ian Walker, is about the only place I know where such a good all-round bag could be got to compare with this. I believe I am correct in saying that not once but on two separate occasions Sir Ian killed, not a stag, a salmon and a grouse in one day, but double this bag, which must be a record, though records in sport are not as a whole to be commended. Sir Ian, it may be added, probably knows more about grouse than anyone, and is, in addition, about the best living grouse shot. 1942 was a bad year for grouse, but Colonel Haig was kind enough to ask me to Inchrory, or Glenavon as it is sometimes called, in October of that year and I was lucky enough to kill a nice royal on ground which interested me enormously, and, in addition, saw more grouse than I had seen anywhere else in Scotland during the course of my official wanderings. I also saw salmon lying in layers in the gin-clear pools of the river, though they would not look at a fly. This was earlier in the year.

However, to return to Struy. I did not actually stalk there till ten years later, when I had been round the world and shot many strange and exotic animals. I had killed a few stags at Balmacaan, at Corriemoney and at Dunmagglass. A poor 6-pointer at Scatwell got me into trouble, as I have related elsewhere. Comparisons may be odious but they are inevitable. Of all the forests in which I have been privileged to stalk, I would put Knoydart first, though there are others which hold my affections to an equal degree. Regarded purely as a forest, Knoydart is unequalled. Just as we may deplore the absence of some particular characteristic when regarding a beautiful woman, surmising that by its presence her loveliness would be enhanced, so when observing a landscape we may regret that there is some feature lacking. There is no scenery which would not be rendered more striking by the presence of water, and that perhaps is why I regard Knoydart in retrospect as of such surpassing loveliness; for there is



water everywhere. Its marches are mostly water: Loch Nevis, the Sound of Sleat, Loch Hourn, and in addition there are lochs and burns to link it to one's heart. Never shall I forget my first sight of Loch Dubhlochan with Sgur na Ciche, which I was afterwards to know so well from its eastern side, rising in exactly the right position beyond.

I first stalked there in 1913 at the invitation of Arthur Bowlby. He was a clever man, who if he had not been wealthy might have made his mark in various callings. I had been married the year before, and when my wife and I embarked on his yacht the "Vanessa," at Mallaig after the train journey, quite the most beautiful in the British Isles, from Fort William, it was like being transported to Fairyland. My only worry was money, as a fortnight's stalking (which meant alternate days) was not cheap, but we had a wonderful visit, and I was lucky enough to kill a nice 10-pointer. I have not stalked there since those days, though later I visited Lord Brocket, its present owner, to paint some stalking pictures.

Next to Knoydart I should put Glenkingie and Dalness, the latter the steepest ground I have ever been on with the exception of Kintail. I was fortunate enough to stalk there with Bill Coke in the last year that it was a forest before being acquired by the National Trust. It is magnificent ground and more suited to a young man than an old.

Glenkingie, for its size, is probably the best forest in Scotland, marching with Barrisdale (which was part of Knoydart in 1913 where Arthur Bowlby killed many of his best heads, including the famous 14-pointer of 1898), Glendessary, Knoydart and part of Achnacarry. The Kingie valley is one of the finest for deer which can be imagined, and it was here that Lord Burton held deer drives for King Edward VII. The King's butt is still to be seen.

Lord Belper took a lease of Glenkingie in 1924, and the following year invited me to stalk there. I considered myself lucky, and still more so when he said, "I hope you will come every year to stalk so long as I am here." Half the joy in life lies in anticipation, and few remarks have brought me greater happiness. To Lord and Lady

Belper I owe a debt which the years have not withered, for I enjoyed their hospitality in the little lodge at Kinlochquoch for the next twelve years with very few omissions. The days I spent there with them still furnish me with many of my happiest memories. All the ground at Kingie is fine stalking, but Corrie na Gaul and its western end is the finest I have ever seen.

Of quite a different type to the forests I have just mentioned are those included in the three glens running westward from the Beaully valley and Strathglass. Glen Strathfarrar, the easternmost of the three, holds Struy, Braulen and Monar. Along their northern marches lies Strathconon. The next glen, lying parallel, is Cannich. The first of the forests within its boundaries is Cozac, sometimes now named after the glen. Where the modern lodge stands is, in the Gaelic, Shallavanach—the Happy Place—and here my dear old friend Archie Campbell, for so many years stalker at Corriemoney and of whom I have so often written in the past, was born. Beyond is Benula, known originally as Luib na damph—the Loop of the Deer. The westernmost of these three glens and the best known is Glen Affaric. Its lower part, until you come to within a mile or two of Affaric Lodge, belongs to Fasnakyle. Beyond Affaric lie Kintail, Killilan and Inverinate, and marching with it to the south, what used to be Guisachan.

In the forests named, with the exception of Braulen, Monar, Fasnakyle and Inverinate, I have had many happy days stalking. Of these three glens, unsurpassed for loveliness, I hesitate to say which is the most beautiful. One might as well try to compare three lovely women. Affaric is generally so regarded because it is the best known. Indeed, in high summer when the birches and firs which clothe the lower slopes of all three whisper and sigh as their graceful outlines are reflected in the still waters of the lochs below, no scenery of this nature which I have ever been so lucky as to see can vie with this glen. But as when admiring the lovely features of some woman acclaimed by all, we encounter one less well known and detect in her some elusive charm which on first glance may not be patently apparent, so on mentally comparing these three glens does a memory or trick of light and shade bring

to mind some feature which causes me to doubt my own first judgment.

Affaric holds a place in my affections which is unique, for I have known it for over fifty years. In those far-off days I never hoped that I should be made free of its marches. It was in 1931 that Warren Swire, who had been my fag at Eton, took a lease of the forest and was kind enough to ask me to stalk on several occasions. More than once circumstances were against me, but I remember more than one delightful visit and recall his hospitality with affection and regret. The western end of the ground is particularly fine. Change is inevitable, but it is sad to think that under the Hydro-Electric scheme Affaric cannot remain as it was of yore.

Benula holds some grand corries running down to Loch Lungard, notably Glen Coillich and Glen Sithidh. I stalked here with Major Mervyn Soames in 1920, and in another season killed a good 13-pointer on this ground. It is now under sheep.

Cozac is a dear little forest with very attractive stalking-ground and holds good deer.

Killilan, too, is now under sheep. The most attractive beat is Glomach and I often stalked here as the guest of the late Melville Wills, whose son Edgar was a friend of my family's. He was killed by an avalanche when ski-ing. On this beat I had one unusual experience. I was out close to the Affaric march on the last day of the season in 1925. It was late in the afternoon when we spied a good 8-pointer with very strong, thick horns. We stalked him as he roared above us among his hinds, and eventually got within shot. Taking the first chance he gave, I missed. The following year I was stalking the same beat during the second week in October. Again I saw the same stag, and eventually killed him within three hundred yards of the spot where I had missed him in the previous year. His very thick horns and the shape of his head, which hangs above me as I write, rendered him quite unmistakable. He had a beam of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches, his length being about 32 inches. Curiously enough, at Killiechonate in this year a stag was killed which might have been his twin brother.

It was in this same year that I killed the only first-class head which I have ever been lucky enough to stalk. For it I am indebted to my old friend Colonel Rupert Shoolbred, who has given me so many happy days at Wyvis. An account of the death of this fine royal I have given in "Hunting and Stalking the Deer," in which Lionel Edwards was my collaborator, published in 1927. Ben Wyvis dominates all the surrounding country of the east coast and there is one magnificent bit of ground—Corrie Mhor. I count myself lucky to have been privileged to stalk there.

Forests vary as much in character as do stags, and stalking at, say, Glenfeshie or Glenmore is as different to stalking forests on the West coast as is a walk down Union Street, Inverness, to one in Piccadilly. There is much more heather on such forests, the hills are more rounded, and on the whole stalking more difficult; at any rate, the final approach.

Captain Graeme Whitelaw was kind enough to invite me to stalk in the latter forest in 1935 when I was painting some stalking pictures for him, and I much enjoyed seeing new country. By dint of shooting bad heads every year he had succeeded in improving his stock. Then the war came and all his labours were lost. He did, however, kill several fine heads which would have done credit to any forest.

Low ground can never hold the same attraction as do the high tops to a stalker, but one can have an enormous amount of fun in this semi-wood stalking, which is by no means easy. The first good head I ever killed was in 1912 at Dundreggan in Glenmoriston, which a friend of mine, Henry Burton Tate, had taken. He was a good second-class royal with a length of 32 inches, beautiful points but narrow in span. I should not like to swear that he was not a few yards over the march when I got him, but a little licence on such occasions may be forgiven. My host had previously rented Glen Carron, a delightful forest now owned by Lady Evelyn Cobbold. The head stalker when I was there was well over eighty. The second, alluded to as "the lad," was about sixty-five. After my visit, during a hard winter, the wife of the latter died in

the far lodge at Glen Uig and it was many days before his neighbours heard of his plight or could reach him.

With the forests in Perthshire I have but little acquaintance, though I have visited some of them but not to stalk. Fealar, about the highest lodge in Scotland, has always seemed ideal to me, especially for a young married couple keen on stalking. It is miles from anywhere, and the lodge right in the centre of the ground. I should imagine it would be quite easy at times to shoot a stag from the bedroom window.

Gaick, which marches with Glenfeshie and Atholl, has very distinctive characteristics, big rounded hills with deep glens in between, flat moss-grown tops and deep peaty gullies which at times are very useful when stalking. It was rented for many years by Bob Hargreaves and his brothers, and here they used almost annually to get the best bag of grouse obtained on August 12th. Some good heads were killed on Gaick in those days, though I have seen nothing very remarkable since the last war. Here I have had some pleasant days stalking with Ewan Ormiston, including one on which I had the honour of taking out the Minister for Nepal, who had never stalked in Scotland before. Unfortunately he did not get a stag, as there were very few on the ground owing to it having been used for training troops.

Loch Luichart in Ross-shire was rented by Lord Mountgarret in the years immediately preceding the present war. Though I stalked with him here, my visit was marred by bad weather and I did not see so much of the ground as I should have liked. In 1939 he took Cluanie and was again kind enough to ask me to come as his guest. The war, of course, finished that. It is a curious coincidence that the late Henry Straker (who was killed in an accident in the hunting-field) had asked me to stalk there in 1914. War too prevented this. Loch Luichart marches with Fannich, which holds some fine ground, particularly 'the Nest.' Oliver Watney's father killed some very fine heads here prior to the war of 1914, and died on the hill just after he had fired at a stag. It was as his son's guest that I visited Fannich and had some very enjoyable days. A fellow-guest was Antony Lyell, who was then at Oxford.

His was one of those rare and vivid natures whose intense joy in life, gaiety and charm rendered him popular wherever he went. His men adored him, and not only they but a host of others lost a friend who can never be replaced when Captain Lord Lyell was killed in Tunisia in the early summer of 1943. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for one of the bravest deeds in the war, and the memory of this gallant gentleman will live, especially in Scotland, when most of us are dead and forgotten. Had he been spared, he would undoubtedly have made his mark, for he had many striking and unusual qualities.

Very different in character to those forests is Langwell in Caithness. I went to Langwell at the invitation of the late Duke of Portland in 1935 to paint some pictures for him and to stalk. The Duke was a great English gentleman and as simple and unaffected as one of his own stalkers. This simplicity and innate kindliness, as I have remarked before, has usually been a characteristic of those whom I have met who have been fortunate enough to be born into great positions. As illustrating the thoughtfulness and kindliness of the Duke, I cannot refrain from relating an incident that occurred during my visit. I had dressed for dinner on the first evening of my arrival and opened a small leather box in which I kept various studs and trinkets, including a thin flat gold watch. On removing this I found that the glass was broken. I held it in my hand and brushed the broken glass into the fireplace. I must have done it very carelessly, for the watch flew out of my hand and landed in the heart of the fire! Francis Needham, the Duke's secretary, was in the room and we eventually dislodged the remains, but not before the watch had been irretrievably damaged. I was upset as it was a present from my brother and I valued it for sentimental reasons. After dinner the Duke usually disappeared to his own room. If he wished to communicate with any of his guests he sent them a note. I received one later in the evening saying how sorry he was to hear of my mishap. The following morning he said, "I'm so very sorry you lost your watch. What bad luck!" He made various enquiries about it and I thought no more of the incident. A few weeks later, when I was at our home in Staffordshire,

a small parcel arrived. Wondering what it contained, I opened it to find inside a flat gold watch such as I had lost, with a most charming letter from the Duke saying he hoped I would accept the watch he was sending me to replace my own and that it would mark for me many happy hours. There are some who might have thought of such a kind and generous gesture, but not so many who would have followed it up and taken the trouble himself to find a watch so similar to that which I had lost.

Later he gave me a cigarette-lighter, the only practical one I have ever possessed. It is possible to light a pipe with it on the hill, and in wartime was beyond price.

At Langwell the Duke asked me to accompany him on his drives about the place, and more than anything else I used to enjoy his reminiscences of old days when he was young and hearing from his own lips of all the famous men he had met.

He was kind enough to give me copies of his books, and in these I found many of the stories which he had related to me amid the lovely surroundings of Langwell. My wife and I also visited him at Welbeck, where he had many treasures the history of which he has himself related. Not least, was the lovely portrait by Sargent of the Duchess, and also the speaking likeness by Laszlo which is reproduced in "Men and Women and Things" (page 226). Of all the lovely women illustrated, she is the loveliest. I feel privileged to have known this charming and kindly old sportsman, against whom I should think no one has ever said an unkind word.

To jump from Caithness to Argyllshire is easier on paper in these days of petrol shortage than in reality. Blackmount, with the exception of Mar, is the largest forest in Scotland. I was writing a series of articles on famous forests in the "Field" and wanted some information on the spot. That remarkable old lady Mrs. Robert Fleming was then alive, and stalking and fishing with an enthusiasm only equalled by that of her grandchildren. To her and her son Major Philip Fleming and her son-in-law, the late Lord Wyfold, I am indebted for a day on Altachaorinn. It is about the best beat on Blackmount, and of its grandeur dear old Johnnie Millais has written with enthusiasm in

that stalking classic "British Deer and Their Horns." I was fortunate in going out with Kennedy, a keen and enthusiastic stalker, and the day lingers in my memory as one of the most delightful in my stalking experiences. I was lucky enough to kill a nice 11-pointer. The only other Argyllshire forest in which I have stalked is Strontian, which was then rented by Colonel Hamilton Leigh, whose knowledge of deer is great. From him I learned much.

I had a few days in Mar during the war, combining business with pleasure. The forest is so large that I only saw a fraction of it, but there is some attractive stalking-ground, partly wooded, and I enjoyed the magnificent scenery. A nice 10-pointer was my best head, though I could have shot a good royal and saw a very fine young 14-pointer which, if he is not poached, ought to be a really first-class head in a year or two. In the ballroom at Mar hang some 3000 heads, the majority skulls, and in Mar Lodge are others. What particularly interested me when studying them was the difference in type between the old heads killed in the middle of the last century and later ones, obviously the result of crossing with park deer. I preferred the former.

The year before the war, Lord Elphinstone asked me to stalk at Glenmazeran, where I rather marred the good impression I made with my first effort bringing off quite a spectacular shot, by breaking a stag's leg and losing him. Rather pleased with myself, I had fired through some whin bushes without taking sufficient care, which was inexcusable. Over-confidence should always be guarded against when one feels at all 'uppish,' otherwise this 'uppishness' may meet with its due reward.

The best known forest in Ross-shire is perhaps Strathconon. In 1926 I had a day's stalking there which I have already mentioned and shall always remember. I did not then know Captain Combe so well as I did in later years when we grew intimate. He was an ardent stalker and retained his enthusiasm till he died at the age of eighty-three. He was one of a type which is growing rarer with the years, and I cherish his memory with affection. Captain Combe had probably the best all-round collection of heads in Scotland.



Braeroy in Lochaber has no very striking characteristics, but I enjoyed some happy days here with the late Robin Scott in 1925. He was well known as a big-game hunter and for his collection of armour. Another well-known big-game hunter, Major H. C. Maydon, was a fellow-guest and we had many talks on our mutual hobby. There is a magnificent view from the drive at Ardverikie looking back across Loch Laggan to the Braeroy tops. Ardverikie and Braeroy are both owned by Sir John Ramsden, as is Ben Alder. This is at present rented by Captain Reid Walker, who was kind enough to invite me there for a few days. Unfortunately, my visit was marred by bad weather and a series of misfortunes. On my first stalk I killed a stag and walked home in advance of the stalker, finding the distance along the shores of Loch Ericht rather a strain. It is usually undertaken by boat, but in wartime there was no petrol available for such purposes. I was staying at Dalwhinnie, and arriving at Ben Alder next morning found that the stalker had only just reached home. The pony had got bogged after I left him, he had been sitting up all night beside it, and only managed its extrication about six o'clock in the morning. The stag had been left where I shot it. We walked back to where it was lying and eventually got it on to the pony's back. Directly the coat was removed from the latter's head it executed a series of bucks which would not have disgraced the most fiery mustang ever taking part in a Western film. The surrounding country was strewn with buckles, straps, bits of saddle, stag and anything else which it could detach from its person. The weather was still bad and our day's stalking was ruined, but I saw enough of the forest to realise what grand stalking-ground it held though I only saw but a small portion. There were some fine corries to the west, and in the distance across the flats I could see the small lodge at the far end of the Ardverikie ground, the walls of which Johnnie Millais had decorated with a series of stalking scenes. I wish I could have seen them.

Achnacarry, Lochiel's famous home, was rented in 1928 by some young friends of mine, Sandy Grant, his brother Patrick, now a major in the Scots Guards, and Cuthbert Fitzherbert. They were all very keen stalkers and were

kind enough to invite me to come as their guest. I had a splendid time and was much touched that they should have included a man so much older than themselves to share their sport. The best head I killed was an 11-pointer. I loved seeing new ground, and enjoyed the journey back in the now defunct "Eagle" which had so long ploughed the waters of Loch Arkaig. It was picturesque to see the fires on the banks of the loch marking the positions of dead stags waiting to be retrieved.

Another fine forest marching with Lochiel's ground is Meoble, for long rented by my dear old friend the late Walter Jones. For many years I used to go annually to Aberuchill, his home near Comrie, in order to stalk roe. At Meoble he killed the best 9-pointer I have ever seen, and many other good heads. Meoble, when I stalked there, was owned by Sir Berkeley Sheffield, whose daughter Diana, a very keen stalker, married the Hon. R. Digby. I saw one very good head but was unable to get a shot.

Another forest adjoining Lochiel's ground, where I stalked with some Belgian friends who had rented it, is Garrygualach. Although it holds no ground that is really high, it is beautifully situated in Glengarry and there is always the chance of a good stag in October.

One of the best fortnight's stalking I have ever had was during the last war. I had saved up my leave, and my wife and I went to Corriemoney for the last twelve days of the season. In those twelve days we killed 40 good stags, of which my wife was responsible for 17. It was hard work, owing to labour difficulties, and lack of ponies to get them in, but great fun and wonderful health insurance. My best day was 5, including a royal, all within a mile of each other. It is much easier to obtain numbers on ground of this sort than on really high ground composed of large corries.

The best consistent shooting I ever did was to kill 41 stags consecutively without losing any. I did not kill all with the first shot, but none was lost at which I fired. I attribute this result to the pointed copper-tipped bullet which one could get prior to 1914 for the .275 H.V. Rigby Mauser. They were far superior to anything produced since, but are now unprocurable in this country, though

I got some in Germany in 1937. I was younger then and do not suppose that I could equal this performance now. Shooting, of course, is largely a matter of nerves, and if one is fit and well, with good eyesight (though I have never had this blessing) and confidence in one's own powers, the results obtained may be surprising.

To encourage younger stalkers who have perhaps been in for a run of bad luck I will relate an experience of my own. I hope they will not accuse me of slipping this in to vaunt my own prowess. I had lost confidence in my shooting as I had had very little stalking for several years. Such is not unlikely if shots that you would take in your stride when stalking every day do not come off when you only get one or two odd days in a season. I felt I was getting old. I had toiled up 3700 feet behind, a long way behind, a young and active stalker and had serious thoughts that I ought to give up the hill. I lay gasping at the top, full of pretty evil thoughts, while he, with a rather supercilious air, or I thought it was supercilious, lit his beastly cigarette. No stalker in my young days would ever have dreamed of smoking a cigarette. (I learned later that his conduct was intentional.) Stung by his imagined self-complacency I suddenly shot at him:

"How old are you?"

Rather startled, he dropped the cigarette and answered: "Twenty-eight." (This was during this war.)

"Well, I'm over sixty," I snapped, "and you remember that when you're going up a hill. Thirty years ago I'd have taken you on and walked your head off" (he was about half my size), "but I don't propose to try now."

He looked still more startled and said: "Tak' your time. Tak' your own time and go in front."

"I'm going to take my own time, thank you very much," I replied, boiling inwardly (no one likes to have his age thrust on him), "and I'm not going in front. I don't know where you propose going and I'll follow you, but I'm not trying to catch a train."

A somewhat chastened procession started on again. My son and a friend of his, Neil Hughes-Onslow, were with me, and the latter was going to have the first shot, but we were out for food and I had my rifle also. The wind

was wrong, I was very cross, my boy had failed to bring off a difficult shot in the morning through no fault of his own, and it seemed that we should not get in to the deer, which we could see evacuating a corrie below us. Eventually, however, we reached a ridge far down the depth of the corrie and there was a chance that the deer might break back to cross to its other side. The stalker, to do him justice, hit it off pretty well, for as we crossed the ridge a bunch of stags trotted into view on our right. After a second's hesitation they came on, disappeared below us and were obviously making for a knoll about a hundred and twenty yards off which they would have to pass in order to get back again to the far side of the corrie. The stalker had my son's rifle and was on my left. There was but little time to bring the latter to my side to give him a shot, as the whole affair was over in less than a minute, though the old, courteous stalker of my youth would have attempted it. Not so my friend.

"Don't move," said he, "don't move," as the stags emerged below us and cantered up the knoll end on. Then he put up my son's rifle and opened fire. I was furious, and delighted beyond measure when he missed the stag at which he had aimed. Much too angry to hesitate or feel self-conscious, I was sitting in my favourite position, an elbow on each knee. The deer were slightly but not much below me and the light was good. Following the late Mr. Grimble's advice, I pitched my sights between the horns of the stag he had missed and had the satisfaction of seeing him fall as if poleaxed. I switched to another, missed, and killed him with the third shot (a deadly one if it comes off, smashing the spinal column or entering the brain).

A third stag turned broadside and I got him, though he needed another shot as I had hit him too far back.

"Good shot," said the stalker, looking rather sheepish.

"I may not be able to walk," said I, "but I can still sometimes shoot."

I was much more angry than smug. I shot quite well after this episode. I took this neck shot several times later during that season, which I should certainly have hesitated to do prior to this incident. One should not hesitate

really, as it is either a clean miss or a kill, but I relate this to show what a little self-confidence can do.

Personally I have never been afraid of a 'facing' shot, for the same reason. Most misses are vertical, and with a facing shot the vital area is really enlarged, as anywhere from the throat to the bottom of the chest is usually fatal. My stalker friend was certainly using a rifle he did not know, and for all I know he may be an excellent shot with his own, but to become accustomed to your own weapon is half the battle. I think I am right in saying that my friend 'Karamoja' Bell attributed much of his success as an elephant hunter to the fact that he never had his rifle out of his hand. It literally fitted him like a glove. But then he is a dead-shot in any case.

My official duties took me to many parts of Scotland between 1939 and 1944, though in the early years of the war I was much too busy to have any time for stalking. In these years I do not suppose I killed a dozen stags in all. Lord Dalhousie was kind enough to give me a day at Invermark in 1941, and I enjoyed seeing new ground as I had never stalked in Angus before. In 1942 I had to go to Rhum, and enjoyed several days in this lovely island through the kindness of Lady Bullough. There are some fine corries on the eastern side of the island. I also visited Islay, though at the wrong time of year so far as stags were concerned. It was terrible weather during the whole of my visit.

There is no sensation in later days quite like that evoked by those first glorious stalks and the killing of one's first stag. Only one there is comparable, and that I experienced when I took my son out on our own little bit of ground at Corriemoney on October 5th, 1940, and he, whilst I acted as stalker, achieved an ambition similar to that which I had fulfilled forty-six years before, killing his first stag. It was a day of great satisfaction to both of us, and calls up memories which no other day since September 18th, 1897, can equal in my sporting career. On no other day did the hills look so blue, the air smell so fragrant or the feeling of satisfaction at the end of a day's good stalking glow so intensely, as when we walked back together that evening and he said, "I would

sooner get a stag with you than anything in the world." It is these small, simple pleasures which reconcile one to so much that is hard in life.

In my career as a sportsman there have been many unexpected and unsolicited experiences which have given me satisfaction and happiness. I do not profess to be a good man, but I can recognise goodness when I see it, and there are two men whom it is my privilege to call my friends in whom this quality is predominant. Judge of my pleasure when from one of them I received the following verses which I cannot refrain from quoting. They are written by the Rev. Nathaniel Micklem, the Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, whose Sunday broadcasts have given pleasure to so many.

"That which men love they kill," the Freudians tell,  
"For hand in hand with love must hatred go;  
Love will no rival and no partner know;  
Better destroy than share, says love cruel."  
But I know a huntsman to whose rifle fell  
Full many a head of stag and graceful roe,  
Of golden takin, chamois, buffalo,  
Ibex and antelope and swift gazelle.

Their gallant carriage, gentle loveliness,  
Their vivid life on mountain crag or field  
He loved, and, that his love with all be shared,  
He painted them, his brush their soft caress,  
So transient beauty, which to time must yield,  
Was held immortal, by his art declared.

I may perhaps be forgiven, as I am writing this whilst we are still engaged in the most terrible war the world has ever seen, for touching again on the subject of deer in wartime. Conditions are so entirely different from those prevailing in peace that to apply peacetime standards is not only useless but stupid. Labour, transport and ammunition shortage all combine to render the killing of deer no longer a sport but a business. Some critics seem quite incapable of grasping this fact. One man, above any in Scotland, grasped the situation early and dealt with it in a businesslike and capable manner. He has come in for much unjust criticism and abuse.

In 1940, before transport difficulties had become acute,

I was asked by Captain Reid Walker to take part in a grouse drive at Clunes. It was blowing a gale with mist and rain. The birds came like bullets, and many, so far as I was concerned, escaped unharmed. Not so with the gun in the next butt. A very tall, big man, he was shooting with one gun, but the execution he did with this more than made up for his lack of a second. Scarcely a bird he fired at escaped, and though I was continually endeavouring to wipe my glasses it was impossible to conceal the fact that he was wiping my eye with a skill and regularity which became slightly monotonous. After the drive we compared notes. I did not then know who he was, but subsequently discovered that a charming manner, a ready smile and an air of boyish innocence concealed an extremely acute and businesslike brain. Indeed, a mutual friend confided to me later that, introduced into big business, he would be established in Park Lane with a fleet of cars and secretaries before his competitors had realised what had happened. This was my first introduction to Ewan Ormiston. The son of the head stalker at Gaick, he wished to follow his father's profession but circumstances ordained otherwise and he started a butcher's business in Newtonmore. A keen stalker, a very fine shot and a born hill-man, there is nothing he does not know about the business-side of handling venison. It is easy enough to kill deer. Under war conditions the difficulty lies in transporting them. Their delivery is uncertain. They cannot be handed in at a shop like beef or mutton, nor, owing to various conditions, of which the weather is the chief item, can their numbers be guaranteed on a certain day and a certain place. We had many talks on these problems and eventually he decided on a plan which I had suggested to the then Secretary of State for Scotland prior to this war when the increase in the numbers of deer began to cause alarm owing to the damage which was being caused to agricultural land. This was to form a sort of flying squad of experienced shots who could be moved with their transport and impedimenta, no easy task, to where they were most needed.

Eventually, Ormiston rented many deer forests, extending to over 400,000 acres, relying on his ability to dispose of the venison to repay him for his original outlay. His

method was, when engaged in actually killing deer, where possible, to manœuvre them into such a position that the largest number could be killed in the shortest time and from whence they could be transported with the least possible delay to their final destination. It seemed, and still seems to me, the sanest and most economical method of dealing with a difficult situation. I received many letters, and many appeared in the Press, inveighing against such procedure as unsportsmanlike, wasteful and disgusting. The number of deer wounded were said to be immense. Personally, after watching a move of this sort at Achdaliu, I am very doubtful if more deer escape wounded than would do so if pre-war stalking was in question. In any case, it seems to me the only method by which, in those cases where the owner is unable to get deer killed by himself or his staff, the requisite number of deer could be obtained.

Now, for the time being, I must leave the hill. Its memories will always be with me to solace and to cheer. Some day the war will end, the captains and the kings will depart, and then to the hill those of us who love it can return, to find again those joys and that peace for which we have so long yearned when we know that all we love is safe.



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